





THE
PHILOSOPHY
OF THE
ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS
OF MAN.

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Printed by John Stark.

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BOOK THIRD.

CHAPTER SECOND.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES
OF NATURAL RELIGION.

SECTION II.

*Of the Argument for the Existence of God from
Final Causes.*

HAVING treated at considerable length of the foundations of our reasoning from the Effect to the Cause, and of the evidences of Active Power exhibited in the universe, I proceed now to illustrate that principle of our nature which leads us to apprehend intelligence or design when we see a va-

riety of means conspiring to a particular end. In examining this part of our constitution, my object is similar to what I had in view in the speculations in which we have last been engaged, not to bring to light any new or abtruse conclusion, but to vindicate against the cavils of sceptics, a mode of reasoning that is equally familiar to the philosopher and the vulgar, and which is not more intimately connected with our religious belief than with our rational conduct in the common business of life. What this mode of reasoning is will be best explained by a few examples :—And for this purpose I shall avail myself of the evidences for the existence of God which Socrates is said to have appealed to in his conversation on this subject with Aristodemus, as it is related with an almost divine simplicity in the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon.*

“ Tell me, Aristodemus, is there any man whom
“ you admire on account of his merit ?”

* “ Je ne sais s’il y a aucune preuve métaphysique plus
“ frappante, et qui parle plus fortement à l’homme, que cet ordre
“ admirable qui regne dans le monde ; et s’il jamais il y a eu un
“ plus bel argument que ce verset, *Celi enarrant Gloriam Dei*.
“ Aussi vous voyez, que Newton n’en apporte point d’autre à la
“ fin de son *Optique* et de ses *Principes*. Il ne trouvoit point de
“ raisonnement plus convainquant et plus beau en faveur de la
“ Divinité que celui de Platon, qui fait dire à un de ses interlocuteurs, ‘ Vous jugez que j’ai une âme intelligente parceque
“ vous appercevez de l’ordre dans mes paroles et dans mes actions, jugez donc en voyant l’ordre de ce monde qu’il y a une
“ âme souverainement intelligente.’ ” — (Voltaire, *Elem. de Philosophie*, Chap. i. De Dieu.)

Aristodemus having answered, “*many*,”—“name some of them, I pray you.”

“I admire,” said Aristodemus, “Homer for his Epic Poetry ; Melanippides for his Dithyrambics ; Sophocles for Tragedy ; Polycletes for Statuary ; and Zeuxis for Painting.

“But which seems to you most worthy of admiration, Aristodemus,—the artist who forms Images void of Motion and Intelligence, or one who hath the skill to produce animals that are endued not only with activity, but understanding?”

“The *latter*, there can be no doubt, replied Aristodemus, provided the production was not the effect of *chance*, but of wisdom and contrivance.”

“But since there are many things, some of which we can easily see the *use* of, while we cannot say of others, to what purpose they were produced,—which of these, Aristodemus, do you suppose the work of wisdom?”

“It should seem the most reasonable to affirm it of those whose fitness and utility are so evidently apparent.”

“But it is evidently apparent, that He who at the beginning made man, endued him with Senses *because* they were *good* for him,—eyes wherewith to behold whatever was visible, and ears to hear whatever was to be heard. For say, Aristodemus, to what purpose should odours be prepared, if the sense of smelling had been denied? Or why the distinctions of bitter and sweet, of savoury and unsavoury, unless a palate had been

“ likewise given, conveniently placed, to arbitrate
“ between them, and declare the difference? Is not
“ that Providence, Aristodemus, in a most eminent
“ manner conspicuous, which, because the eye of
“ man is so delicate in its contexture, hath there-
“ fore prepared eyelids like doors, whereby to se-
“ cure it—which extend of themselves whenever it
“ is needful, and again close when sleep approach-
“ es? Are not these eyelids provided as it were
“ with a fence on the edge of them, to keep off the
“ wind and guard the eye? Even the eyebrow it-
“ self is not without its office; but as a pent-house
“ is prepared to turn off the sweat, which, falling
“ from the forehead, might enter and annoy that
“ no less tender than astonishing part of us! Is it
“ not to be admired that the ears should take in
“ sounds of every sort, and yet are not too much
“ filled by them? That the fore-teeth of the animal
“ should be formed in such a manner as is evident-
“ ly best suited for the cutting of its food, as those
“ on the side for grinding it in pieces? That the
“ mouth through which this food is conveyed should
“ be placed so near the nose and the eyes as to pre-
“ vent the passing *unnoticed* whatever is unfit for
“ nourishment; while nature, on the contrary, hath
“ set at a distance, and concealed from the senses,
“ all that might disgust or any way offend them?
“ And can’st thou still doubt, Aristodemus! whe-
“ ther a disposition of parts like *this* should be the
“ work of chance, or of wisdom and contrivance?”

“ I have no longer any doubt, replied Aristode-

“ mus ; and indeed the more I consider it, the more
“ evident it appears to me, that man must be the
“ *masterpiece* of some great artificer, carrying
“ along with it infinite marks of the love and fa-
“ vour of Him who hath thus formed it.”

“ And what thinkest thou, Aristodemus, of that *de-*
“ *sire* in the individual which leads to the continuance
“ of the species ? Of that tenderness and affection
“ in the female towards her young, so necessary for
“ its preservation ? Of that unremitted love of life,
“ and dread of dissolution, which take such strong
“ possession of us from the moment we begin to
“ be ?”

“ I think of them, answered Aristodemus, as so
“ many regular operations of the same great and
“ wise artist, deliberately determined to preserve
“ what he hath once made.”

“ But farther,—unless thou desirest to ask me
“ questions ;—seeing, Aristodemus, thou thyself art
“ conscious of reason and intelligence, supposest
“ thou there is no intelligence elsewhere ? Thou
“ knowest thy body to be a small part of that wide
“ extended earth which thou everywhere beholdest ;
“ —the moisture contained in it thou also knowest
“ to be a small portion of that mighty mass of wa-
“ ters whereof seas themselves are but a part ;
“ while the rest of the elements contribute out of
“ their abundance to thy formation. It is the soul
“ then alone,—that intellectual part of us ! which
“ is come to *thee* by some lucky chance ; from, I
“ know not where ; if so be, there is indeed no in-

“telligence elsewhere. And we must be forced to
“confess that this stupendous universe, with all
“the various bodies contained therein, equally
“amazing, whether we consider their magnitude or
“number, whatever their use, whatever their or-
“der,—*all* have been produced, not by *intelligence*
“but *chance* !”

“It is with difficulty that I can suppose other-
“wise, returned Aristodemus, for I behold none of
“those gods whom you speak of as making and
“governing all things ; whereas I see the artists,
“when at their work, here among us.”

“Neither yet seest thou thy soul, Aristodemus,
“which, however, most assuredly governs thy bo-
“dy ; although it may well seem, by thy manner
“of talking, that it is *chance*, and not *reason* which
“governs thee.”

“I do not despise the gods, said Aristodemus ;
“on the contrary, I conceive so highly of their ex-
“cellence, as to suppose they stand in no need
“either of me or of my services.”

“Thou mistakest the matter, Aristodemus ; the
“greater magnificence they have shown in their
“care of *thee*, so much the more honour and ser-
“vice thou owest them.”

“Be assured, said Aristodemus, if I once could
“be persuaded the gods took care of man, I
“should want no monitor to remind me of my
“duty.”

“And canst thou doubt, Aristodemus, if the
“gods take care of man ! Hath not the glorious

“ privilege of walking upright been *alone* bestowed on him, whereby he may, with the better advantage, survey what is around him ; contemplate with more ease those splendid objects which are above ; and avoid the numerous ills and inconveniences which would otherwise befall him ? Other animals, indeed, they have provided with feet, by which they may remove from one place to another ; but to *man*, they have also given *hands*, with which he can form many things for his use, and make himself happier than creatures of any other kind. A tongue hath been bestowed on every other animal ; but what animal, except man, hath the power of forming words with it, whereby to explain his thoughts, and make them intelligible to others ? and to show that the gods have had regard to his very pleasures, they have not limited them, like those of other animals, to times and seasons, but man is left to indulge in them whenever not hurtful to him.”

“ But it is not with respect to the body alone that the gods have shown themselves thus bountiful to man ! their most excellent gift is that *soul* they have infused into him, which so far surpasses what is elsewhere to be found. For by what animal, except man, is even the existence of those gods discovered, who have produced, and still uphold, in such regular order, this beautiful and stupendous frame of the universe ? What other species of creatures are to be found that

“ can serve—that can adore them ? What other
“ animal is able, like man, to provide against the
“ assaults of heat and cold, of thirst and hunger ?
“ that can lay up remedies for the time of sickness,
“ and improve the strength nature hath given by
“ a well-proportioned exercise ? that can receive,
“ like him, information and instruction ; or so hap-
“ pily keep in memory what he hath seen, and
“ heard, and learnt ? These things being so, who
“ seeth not that man is, as it were, *a God* in the
“ midst of this visible creation ; so far doth he
“ surpass, whether in the endowments of soul or
“ body, all animals whatsoever that have been pro-
“ duced therein ! For if the body of the ox had
“ been joined to the mind of man, the acuteness of
“ the latter would have stood him in small stead,
“ while unable to execute the well-designed plan ;
“ nor would the human form have been of more
“ use to the brute, so long as it remained destitute
“ of understanding. But in thee ! Aristodemus,
“ hath been joined to a wonderful soul a body no
“ less wonderful ; and sayest thou after this, ‘ the
“ gods take no thought for me ! ’ What wouldst thou,
“ then, more to convince thee of their care ? ”

“ I would they should send and inform me, said
“ Aristodemus, what things I *ought*, or *ought not*
“ to do ; in like manner as thou sayest they fre-
“ quently do to thee.”

“ And what then, Aristodemus ! supposest thou,
“ that when the gods give out some oracle to *all*
“ the Athenians, they mean it not for *thee* ?—If,

“ by their prodigies, they declare aloud to all Greece,
“ —to *all* mankind,—the things which shall befall
“ them,—are they dumb to *thee* alone?—And art
“ *thou* the only person whom they have placed be-
“ yond their care? Believest thou they would have
“ wrought into the mind of man a persuasion of
“ their being *able* to make him happy or miser-
“ able, if so be they had no such *power*?—Or
“ would not even man himself, long ere this, have
“ seen through the gross delusion?—How is it,
“ Aristodemus, thou rememberest, or remarkest
“ not, that the kingdoms and commonwealths,
“ most renowned as well for their wisdom as anti-
“ quity, are those whose piety and devotion hath
“ been the most observable? and that even man
“ himself is never so well disposed to serve the
“ Deity as in that part of life when reason bears
“ the greatest sway, and his judgment supposed in
“ its full strength and maturity. Consider, my
“ Aristodemus, that the soul which resides in thy
“ body can govern it at pleasure. Why then
“ may not the soul of the universe, which pervades
“ and animates every part of it, govern it in like
“ manner?—If thine eye hath the power to take
“ in many objects, and these placed at no small
“ distance from it, marvel not if the eye of the
“ Deity can, at one glance, comprehend the whole!
“ And as thou perceivest it not beyond thy ability
“ to extend thy care, at the same time, to the con-
“ cerns of Athens, Egypt, Sicily, why thinkest
“ thou, my Aristodemus, that the Providence of

“ God may not easily extend itself throughout the
 “ whole universe ? As, therefore, among men we
 “ make best trial of the affection and gratitude of
 “ our neighbour by showing him kindness, and dis-
 “ cover his wisdom by consulting him in our dis-
 “ tress, do thou, in like manner, behave towards
 “ the gods. And if thou wouldst experience what
 “ their wisdom, and what their love, render thyself
 “ deserving the communication of some of those
 “ divine secrets which may not be penetrated by
 “ man, and are imparted to those alone who con-
 “ sult, who adore, who obey the Deity. Then
 “ shalt thou, my Aristodemus, understand there is
 “ a Being whose eye pierceth throughout all nature,
 “ and whose ear is open to every sound ; extend-
 “ ed to all place ; extending through all time ;
 “ and whose bounty and care can know no other
 “ bounds than those fixed by his own creation !”

“ By this discourse, and others of the like na-
 “ ture, Socrates taught his friends that they were
 “ not only to forbear whatever was impious, unjust,
 “ or unbecoming before men ; but even when alone
 “ they ought to have a regard to all their actions,
 “ since the gods have their eyes continually upon
 “ us, and none of our designs can be concealed
 “ from them.” *

The evidence which the foregoing considerations
 afford for the existence of God constitutes what is
 commonly called the argument from *Final Causes*,

* Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates. Translated by Sarah Fielding.

and as the expression has the sanction of use in its favour, we shall continue to employ it, notwithstanding its impropriety. It was first introduced by Aristotle, who distinguished causes into four kinds, the Efficient, the Material, the Formal, and the Final: A distinction, which, as Dr Reid justly observes, “ like many other of Aristotle’s, is only a
 “ distinction of the various meanings of an ambigu-
 “ ous word ; for the efficient, the matter, the form,
 “ and the end, have nothing common in their na-
 “ ture by which they may be accounted species of
 “ the same genus. But the Greek word which we
 “ translate *cause* had these four different mean-
 “ ings in Aristotle’s days, and we have added *other*
 “ meanings. We do not indeed call the matter or
 “ form of a thing its cause; but we have final
 “ causes, second causes, instrumental causes, im-
 “ mediate causes, predisponent causes, and many
 “ others.”*

* This distinction of Aristotle’s is illustrated by Seneca in his 65th Epistle. “ Causam Aristotelis putat tribus modis dici.
 “ Prima inquit, causa est ipsa materia, sine qua nihil potest effici.
 “ Secunda opifex. Tertia, forma quæ unicuique operi imponi-
 “ tur, tanquam statuæ ; nam hanc Aristoteles *εἶδος* vocat. Quar-
 “ ta quoque, inquit, his accedit, propositum totius operis.

“ Quid sit hoc aperiā. Æs prima statuæ causa est: nun-
 “ quam enim facta esset, nisi fuisset id, ex quo ea funderetur,
 “ ducereturve. Secunda causa, artifex est: non potuisset enim
 “ æs illud in habitum statuæ figurari, nisi accessissent perita
 “ manus. Tertia causa est forma: neque enim statua ista Dory-
 “ phoros aut Diadumenos vocaretur, nisi hæc illi esset impressa
 “ facies. Quarta causa est, faciendi propositum: nam nisi hoc

Dr Reid has observed that the argument from final causes, when reduced to a syllogism, contains

“ fuisset, facta non esset. Quid est propositum ? Quod invitavit artificem, quod ille secutus fecit. Vel pecunia est hoc, si venditurus fabricavit ; vel gloria, si laboravit in nomen ; vel religio, si donum templo paravit. Ergo et hæc causa est, propter quam fit. An non putas inter causas facti operis numerandum, quo remoto factum non esset ? ”

Aristotle's own words on the subject (Natur. Auscult.) are thus translated by Mr Harris.

“ In one manner that may be called a *cause*, out of which, existing as a part of it, anything is made or compounded. Thus is brass the cause of a statue, silver of a cup, and so also the higher genera in which these are included, (as metals the genus of brass and silver, body the genus including metals, &c.) In another way, the form and exemplar of anything is its cause ; that is to say, in other words, the definition or rationale of its essence, (that which, characterizing it to be such a particular thing, distinguishes it from all things else,) and of this rationale the several higher genera. Thus the cause of the diapason or octave is the proportion of two to one ; and more generally than that is number, and is moreover the several parts out of which this definition is formed. Add to this cause, that other, from whence the original principle of change, or of ceasing to change, as for instance the person who deliberates is the cause of that which results from such deliberation ; the father is the cause of the son, and in general the efficient of the thing effected, the power changing to the thing changed. Besides these causes there is that also which is considered as the end, that is to say, the cause for the sake of which the thing is done. Thus the cause of exercising is health ; for if it be asked why does he use exercise ? we say to preserve his health ; and having said thus much, we think we have given the proper cause.”—Works of James Harris, Esq. Vol. I. pp. 156, 157.

two propositions. First, that design may be traced from its effects: This is the major proposition. The minor is, that there are appearances of design in the universe. The ancient sceptics, he says, granted the first, but denied the second. The moderns (in consequence of the discoveries in natural philosophy,) have been obliged to abandon the ground which their predecessors maintained, and have disputed the major proposition.

Among those who have denied the possibility of tracing design from its effects Mr Hume is the most eminent, and he seems to have considered his reasonings on this subject as forming one of the most splendid parts of his philosophy; according to him all such inferences are inconclusive, being neither demonstrable by reasoning, nor deducible from experience.

In examining Mr Hume's argument on this subject, Dr Reid admits that the inferences we make

These quotations (in which I think there is a great deal of what Dr Priestley somewhere calls *solemn trifling*,) appear to me to justify fully the criticism I borrowed from Dr Reid, that they amount only to an exposition of the different meanings of an ambiguous word. I believe it would be for the advantage of moral science if the phrase *final cause* were as completely banished from our language as the phrases *material* and *formal* causes; but when modes of expression are sanctioned by universal use, I do not consider myself as entitled to lead the way in innovations. It is sufficient for me to caution my readers against the improprieties of common language, and to guard as far as I can against the errors in reasoning to which they lead.

of design from its effects are not the result of reasoning or experience; but still he contends such inferences may be made with a degree of certainty equal to what the human mind is able to attain in any instance whatever. The opinions we form of the talents of other men, nay, our belief that other men are intelligent beings, are founded on this very inference of design from its effects. Intelligence and design are not objects of our senses; and yet we judge of them every moment from external conduct and behaviour, with as little hesitation as we pronounce on the existence of what we immediately perceive.

While Dr Reid contends in this manner for the authority of this important principle of our constitution, he bestows due praise on Mr Hume for the acuteness with which he has exposed the inconclusiveness of the common *demonstrations* of the existence of a designing cause, to be found among the writers on natural religion; and he acknowledges the service that, without intending it, he has thereby rendered to the cause of truth; inasmuch as, by the alarming consequences he deduces from his doctrine, he has invited philosophers to an accurate examination of a subject which had formerly been considered in a very superficial manner, and has pointed out to them indirectly the true foundation on which this important article of our belief ought to be placed. With the same view it may be of some use, before we proceed farther, to confirm such of Mr Hume's principles as appear to

be just by some additional remarks and illustrations.

First, then, it may be observed (as a strong presumption that our belief of the existence of a designing cause is not the result of reasoning) that it has prevailed in all nations and ages, among the unlearned, as well as among the learned. Indeed, without a capacity of inferring design from its effects, it would be impossible for us to conduct ourselves in the common affairs of life ; a consideration which of itself renders it probable to those who are acquainted with the general analogy of our constitution, that it is not entrusted to the slow and uncertain exercise of our reasoning powers, but that it arises from some intuitive perception of the mind.

In order to feel the full force of these observations, it is necessary to consider, that without a capacity of inferring design from its effects, it would be impossible for us to form any judgment of the intellectual powers, or of the characters of other men, or even to know that they are intelligent beings. The qualities in their minds are not objects of our senses, we only perceive their effects ; but these effects indicate to us certain designs and purposes from which they proceed, as certainly as an impression made on an organ of sense indicates the existence of the object. The inferences we make of intelligence and design, as displayed in the universe, are perfectly analogous to this ; and whatever sceptical doubts affect our conclusions in

the one case are equally well founded in the other.

As a farther proof that this principle is not demonstrable, we may remark, that those authors who have been most successful in exposing the doubts of sceptics on the subject have had recourse not to argument, but to ridicule, and have rested their cause chiefly on a view of the absurdities and inconsistencies into which similar doubts would lead us, if they were extended to the common concerns of life : In a word, the only proof they give of the principle, is by showing that no man can call it in question, without justly exposing himself to the charge of insanity.

“ Hic ego non mirer esse quemquam, qui sibi
 “ persuadeat, corpora quædam solida atque indivi-
 “ dua vi et gravitate ferri, mundumque effici orna-
 “ tissimum et pulcherrimum ex eorum corporum
 “ concursione fortuita ? Hoc qui existimat fieri
 “ potuisse, non intelligo, cur non idem putet, si
 “ innumerabiles unius et viginti formæ literarum
 “ vel aureæ, vel quales libet,* aliquo conjiciantur,
 “ posse ex his in terram excussis annales Ennii, ut
 “ deinceps legi possint, effici ; quod nescio an ne
 “ in uno quidem versu possit tantum valere fortuna.
 “ Isti autem quemadmodum asseverant, ex corpus-
 “ culis non colore, non qualitate aliqua, quam
 “ ποιότῃτα Græci vocant, non sensu præditis,

* It has been thought by some that this passage of Cicero may have perhaps suggested the first idea of the art of Printing by means of moveable types,

“ sed concurrentibus temerè atque casu, mundum
 “ esse perfectum? Vel innumerabiles potius in
 “ omni puncto temporis alios nasci, alios interire?
 “ Quòd si mundum efficere potest concursus atomo-
 “ rum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur
 “ urbem non potest, quæ sunt minus operosa et
 “ multo quidem facilia? Certe ita temerè de mun-
 “ do effutiunt, ut mihi quidem nunquam hunc ad-
 “ mirabilem cæli ornatum, qui locus est proximus,
 “ suspexisse videantur.” *

So far, therefore, we agree with Mr Hume, in admitting that our inferences of design from its effects are not the result of reasoning. Still farther, we agree with him in admitting, that these inferences are not the result of experience.

In proof of this it is sufficient to observe, that experience can only inform us of what *is*, and not of what *must be*; or, as Dr Reid expresses it, experience *can only discover to us what is CONTINGENTLY true*; it cannot in any instance lead us to the knowledge of *necessary* truth. Now, our belief that a combination of means conspiring to a particular end implies intelligence, involves a perception of necessary truth. It is not that such a combination has been always or generally found to proceed from an intelligent cause, but that an intelligent cause was necessary to its production, and that the contrary supposition is absurd.

But farther, experience can only inform us of a connection between a sign and the thing signified,

* De Nat. Deor. II. 37.

in those cases in which both of these have been separate and distinct objects of our perceptions ; but in the instance before us the thing signified is not an immediate object of sense, nor indeed of consciousness ; for even in my own case I perceive the existence of mind only from its operations and effects. In other words, my knowledge of the *thing signified* is not *direct* : it is only *relative to the signs* by which it is suggested to the understanding.

In what manner, then, it may be asked, shall we explain the origin of our conviction that the universe is the work of a designing cause, if it be granted that this conviction is neither founded on reasoning nor on experience ? According to Mr Hume, nothing more is necessary than these concessions to show that it is an illusion of the imagination, or a prejudice of the nursery.

But surely the inference is too hasty ; for are there not many truths, the contrary of which we feel to be impossible, which are neither demonstrable by reasoning, nor confirmed by experience ? Such are all those truths which are perceived by an intuitive judgment of the mind. The authority of these truths is at least on a footing with those truths which rest on demonstration, inasmuch as all demonstration is ultimately founded on them ; and it is incomparably superior to that of truths learned from experience, inasmuch as the contrary of *these* is always conceivable, and never implies any absurdity or contradiction.

From the observations already made in the prosecution of this argument, I flatter myself it sufficiently appears, that if there be such a thing as an intuitive perception or judgment of the mind, the inferences we make of design from its effects are entitled to the appellation. A capacity of forming such inferences is plainly an essential part of our constitution; and to dispute their certainty in the common conduct of life, by urging sceptical subtleties in opposition to them, would expose a man to the charge of insanity, as infallibly as if he were to dispute the certainty of a mathematical axiom.*

But leaving these abstract topics, let us for a mo-

* The foregoing observations have been all touched upon by former writers. What follows has not hitherto (so far as I know) been urged in opposition to Mr Hume, and to my mind is more satisfactory than any view of the subject that has yet been taken by his opponents. It is, however, after all, little more than a comment on some *concessions* made in the course of the argument by the sceptical Philo; of which concessions I think his opponent, Cleanthes, might have availed himself more triumphantly than he has done.—(See Mr Hume's posthumous Dialogues on Natural Religion.) It must always be remembered that the latter is the hero of the dialogue, and is to be understood as speaking Mr Hume's own opinions.—(See a Confidential Letter of his to his friend Sir Gilbert Elliot, which I have published in the Second Volume of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 532, Third Edition.—See also the concluding paragraph of the Dialogue.) I think it fair to recal this to the reader's memory, as the reasonings of Philo have been repeatedly quoted as parts of Hume's Philosophical System, although the words of Shylock and Caliban might with equal justice be quoted as speaking the real sentiments of Shakespeare.

ment attend to the scope of the sceptical argument as it bears on the evidences of Natural Religion. To those who examine it with attention it must appear obvious, that, if it proves any thing, it leads to this general conclusion, that it would be perfectly impossible for the *Deity*, if he *did* exist, to exhibit to man any satisfactory evidence of design by the order and perfection of his works. That every thing we see *is consistent* with the supposition of its being the work of an intelligent author, Philo would (I presume) have granted ; and at any rate, supposing the order of the universe to have been as complete as imagination can conceive, it would not obviate in the least the objection stated in the dialogue, inasmuch as this objection is founded not on any appearances of disorder or imperfection, but on the impossibility of rendering intelligence and design manifest to our faculties by the effects they produce. Whether this logical proposition is or is not true, can be decided only by an appeal to the judgment of the human understanding in analogous circumstances. If I were thrown ashore on a desert island, and was anxious to leave behind me some memorial which might inform those who should afterwards visit the same spot, that it had once been inhabited by a human being, what expedient could I employ but to execute some work of art ; to rear a dwelling, to enclose a piece of ground, or to arrange a number of stones in such a symmetrical order that their position could not be ascribed to chance ? This would surely be a language

intelligible to all nations, whether civilized or savage ; and which, without the help of reasoning, would convey its meaning with the force of a perception. It was thus that *Aristippus* the *Cyrenaic* felt (according to the story told by *Vitruvius*) when, being shipwrecked on an unknown coast, and seeing some geometrical diagrams traced on the sand, he called aloud to his companions,—*bene speremus comites, HOMINUM enim vestigia video.*

Now all this seems wonderfully applicable to the subject before us. If the universe had really been created by a powerful and intelligent being, whose pleasure it was to proclaim to human reason his existence and attributes, what means could have been devised more effectual for this purpose than those actually employed ! A display of order, of beauty, of contrivance, obvious to the apprehensions of the most unlearned, and commanding more and more our admiration and our wonder as our faculties improve, and as our knowledge extends. These evidences of power, of wisdom, and of goodness may be regarded as *natural and universal signs* by which the Creator reveals himself to his creatures. There is accordingly, “ no speech where “ their voice is not heard. Their line is gone “ through all the earth, and their words to the end “ of the world.”

That in these remarks I have done no injustice to Philo's reasoning, appears from a remarkable passage which occurs in a subsequent part of the dialogue, where, in my opinion, he yields without

reserve the only point for which it was of much importance for a sceptic to contend. The logical subtleties formerly quoted about *experience* and *belief* (even supposing them to remain unanswered,) are but little calculated to shake the authority of principles on which we are every moment called on to act in the business of life. I shall transcribe in Philo's words the passage I allude to, premising only, that, for this memorable concession, (so contrary in its spirit to the sceptical cavils of the ancient Epicureans,) we are chiefly indebted to the lustre thrown on the order of nature by the physical researches of the two last centuries.

“ Supposing there were a God who did not discover himself immediately to our senses, were it possible for him to give stronger proofs of his existence than what appear on the whole face of nature? What indeed could such a divine being do but copy the present economy of things; render many of his artifices so plain that no stupidity could mistake them; afford glimpses of still greater artifices which demonstrate his prodigious superiority over our narrow apprehensions, and conceal altogether a great many from such imperfect creatures?” *

Another concession extorted from Philo by the discoveries of modern science is still more important. I need not point out its coincidence with some remarks already made: “ A purpose, an intention,

* Dialogues on Natural Religion, p. 232.

“ a design, strikes everywhere the most careless,
 “ the most stupid thinker, and no man can be so
 “ hardened in absurd systems as at all times to re-
 “ ject it. *That nature does nothing in vain* is a
 “ maxim established in all the schools, merely from
 “ the contemplation of the works of nature, with-
 “ out any religious purpose ; and from a firm con-
 “ viction of its truth, an anatomist who had ob-
 “ served a new organ or canal would never be sa-
 “ tisfied till he had also discovered its use and inten-
 “ tion. One great foundation of the Copernican
 “ system is the maxim, *that nature acts by the sim-
 “ plest methods, and chooses the most proper means
 “ to any end* ; and astronomers often, without
 “ thinking of it, lay this strong foundation of piety
 “ and religion. The same thing is observable in
 “ other parts of philosophy ; and thus all the scien-
 “ ces almost lead us insensibly to acknowledge a first
 “ intelligent author ; and their authority is often so
 “ much the greater, as they do not directly profess
 “ that intension.” *

“ But,” says Mr Hume in one of his Philosophical
 Essays, “ it is only when two *species* of objects are
 “ found to be constantly conjoined that we can in-
 “ fer the one from the other ; and were an effect
 “ presented which was entirely singular, and could
 “ not be comprehended under any known *species*, I
 “ do not see that we could form any conjecture or

* Dialogues on Natural Religion, p. 228.

“ inference at all concerning its cause. If experi-
 “ ence and observation and analogy be indeed the
 “ only guides which we can reasonably follow in
 “ inferences of this nature, both the effect and
 “ cause must bear a similarity and resemblance to
 “ other effects and causes which we know, and
 “ which we have found in many instances to be
 “ conjoined with each other.”* If I understand
 the scope and import of this reasoning, nothing
 more is necessary for its refutation but to ex-
 plain its meaning. To what, then, does it amount?
 Merely to this! “ That if we had been accus-
 “ tomed to see worlds produced, some by de-
 “ sign, and others without it, and had observed
 “ that such a world as this which we inhabit was
 “ always the effect of design, we might then, from
 “ past experience, conclude that it was in this way
 “ our world was produced ; but having no such ex-

* Hume's *Essays*, Vol. II. p. 157.

As the discourse from which this passage is taken is composed in the form of a dialogue, I do not feel myself entitled to suppose that it expresses Mr Hume's own opinion, more particularly as he has introduced the section with the following paragraph.—“ I was lately engaged in conversation with a
 “ friend who loves sceptical paradoxes ; where, though he ad-
 “ vanced many principles of which I can by no means approve,
 “ yet as they seem to be curious, and to bear some relation to
 “ the chain of reasoning carried on throughout this inquiry, I
 “ shall here copy them from my memory as accurately as I
 “ can, in order to submit them to the judgment of the reader.”
 From these words it may at least be inferred that Mr Hume thought the paradox worthy of consideration, and therefore it would be improper to pass it over here entirely in silence.

“ perience we have no means of forming any conclusion about it.” *

The argument, it is manifest, proceeds entirely on the supposition, that our inferences of design are in every case the result of experience, the contrary of which has been already sufficiently shown; and which indeed, (as Dr Reid has remarked,) “ if it be admitted as a general truth, leads to this conclusion, that no man can have any evidence of the existence of any intelligent being but himself.” †

Having said so much with respect to the sceptical objections suggested in Mr Hume’s philosophy against the argument from final causes, I proceed to consider another objection which some other philosophers have urged with similar views. In order to judge of the wisdom of any design it is necessary (they observe) to know, first, what end the artist proposes to himself, and then to examine the means which he has employed to accomplish it. But in the universe all we see is, that certain things *are* accomplished, without having an oppor-

* Reid’s Essays.

† See some remarks on this subject by Dr Beattie. Essay on Truth, Part i. Chap. ii. 2. Some of them indeed refer rather to our inferences of causation and power, than of intelligence and design; but the objection in question applies equally to our inferences in both cases, and Dr Beattie’s answer is no less satisfactory in the one than in the other.

“ It is true the universe is, as one may say, a work *sui generis*,” &c. P. 117, 2d Edit.

tunity of comparing them with a plan previously proposed. A stone thrown at random must necessarily hit one object or another. When we see, therefore, such an effect produced we are not entitled, independently of other information, to praise the dexterity of the marksman. It is *possible* indeed that this was the object he was aiming at, but as any other supposition is equally possible, it is evident that before we can judge of his skill we must be assured that this really was the case from his own authority.

To this objection it might perhaps be a sufficient answer to observe, that although from a single effect we may not be entitled to infer intelligence in the cause, yet when we see a number of causes conspiring to *one* end the case is different. We here see not only that an effect takes place, but have an intuitive conviction that this was the very effect intended. From seeing a single stone strike an object, we may not be entitled to conclude that this was the object aimed at. But what conclusion would we draw if we saw the same object invariably hit by a number of stones thrown in succession? Surely we should conclude that this was not merely the work of chance.

But this is not all. A variety of cases might be mentioned, in which we have really an opportunity of comparing the wisdom of nature with the ends to which it is directed. Of this many remarkable instances occur in the economy of the human body.

When any accident or disease injures the human

frame, it is well known that the body possesses within itself a power of alleviating or remedying the evil. In consequence of this power, (which has been called the *vis medicatrix naturæ*,) it happens that whenever the structure or functions of any part of the body are disturbed, such operations are immediately excited as have a tendency to restore the machine to its former state. If any of the solid parts of the body are divided in consequence of supuration, wounds, or otherwise, the cavity is in time filled up and obliterated by the operation of natural causes. The breach in the internal parts is remedied, and the wound is gradually covered with a new skin. In many cases, too, in which parts are destroyed, efforts are made by nature to repair the injury. In this manner the skin, tendons, ligaments, and various other parts of the body are restored after having been destroyed. Even bones are restored; not only in cases of fracture, but sometimes a new bone has been formed even when the old one was entirely taken away. In all these instances we not only see an effect produced, but we see the efforts of nature directed to a particular end; inasmuch as, after being turned out of her ordinary course, she comes back to it again without any assistance from art.

There are, too, a great variety of cases, particularly in the animal economy, in which we see the same effect produced in different instances by very different means; and in which, of consequence, we have an opportunity of comparing the wisdom of

nature with the ends she has in view. “ Art and “ means” (says Baxter) “ are designedly multiplied, that we might not take it for the effects of “ chance : And in some cases the method itself is “ different, that we might see it is not the effect of “ surd necessity.”*—“ I shall stop,” (says Derham,) “ at one prodigious work of nature and manifest “ contrivance of the Creator, and that is the circulation of the blood in the fœtus in the womb, “ so different from the method thereof after it is “ born.”

The following ingenious remarks of Mr Ray may be of use for the more complete illustration of the same argument. “ Man is always mending and altering his works ; but nature observes the same tenor, because her works are so perfect that there “ is no place for amendments, nothing that can be “ reprehended. The most sagacious men in so “ many ages have not been able to find any flaw in “ these divinely contrived and formed machines ; no “ blot or error in this great volume of the world, as “ if anything had been an imperfect essay at the “ first ; nothing that can be altered for the better ; “ nothing but if it were altered would be marred. “ This could not have been had man’s body been the “ work of chance, and not counsel and providence. “ Why should there be constantly the same parts ? “ Why should they retain constantly the same “ places ? Why should they be endued with the

* Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, Vol. I. p. 136. (Third Edition.)

“ same shape and figure? Nothing so contrary as
“ constancy and chance. Should I see a man throw
“ the same number a thousand times together upon
“ but three dice, could you persuade me that this
“ were accidental, and that there was no necessary
“ cause of it? How much more incredible, then, is
“ it that constancy in such a variety, such a multi-
“ plicity of parts, should be the result of chance?
“ Neither yet can these works be the effects of ne-
“ cessity or fate, for then there would be the same
“ constancy observed in the smaller as well as in the
“ larger parts of vessels; whereas *there* we see na-
“ ture doth as it were sport itself, the minute rami-
“ fications of all the vessels, veins, arteries, and
“ nerves, infinitely varying in individuals of the
“ same species, so that they are not in any two
“ alike.” *

The foregoing passage I quote with the greater confidence, as I find that the most eminent and original physiologist of the present age has been led, by his enlightened researches concerning the laws of the animal economy, into a train of thinking strikingly similar.

“ Nature” (says Baron Cuvier) “ while compris-
“ ing herself strictly within those limits which the
“ conditions necessary for existence prescribe to her,
“ has yielded to her spontaneous fecundity where-
“ ever these conditions did not limit her operations;
“ and without ever passing beyond the small num-
“ ber of combinations that can be realized in the

* Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation.

“ essential modifications of the important organs.
“ she seems to have given full scope to her fancy
“ in filling up the subordinate parts. With respect
“ to these, it is not inquired whether an individual
“ form, whether a particular arrangement, be neces-
“ sary. It seems often not to have been asked whe-
“ ther it be even useful in order to reduce it to prac-
“ tice. It is sufficient that it be possible, that it de-
“ stroy not the harmony of the whole. Accordingly,
“ as we recede from the principal organs, and ap-
“ proach to those of less importance, the varieties
“ in structure and appearance become more nume-
“ rous ; and when we arrive at the surface of the
“ body, where the parts the least essential, and
“ whose injuries are the least momentous, are placed,
“ the number of varieties is so great that the con-
“ joined labours of naturalists have not yet been
“ able to give us an adequate idea of them.” *

The science of comparative anatomy, too, furnishes very striking confirmations of the foregoing doctrine. From seeing the effect produced in *any one* animal, we might not perhaps be entitled to conclude that it was in order to produce this effect that the organ was contrived. But when, in the case of *different species* of animals, we see the same effect brought about by means extremely different, it is impossible for us to doubt that it was this common end which, in all these instances, nature had in view. And, by the way, it is such comparative views of the structure of different tribes that afford the best

* Leçons d'Anatomie Comparée.

lights for guiding our researches concerning the functions of the different organs in the animal economy. “*Incidenda autem animalia,*” (says Albinus in his preface to Harvey’s *Exercitatio de Motu Cordis,*) “*quibus partes illæ quarum actiones quæ-*
rimus eadem atque homini sunt, aut certę similes
iis ; ex quibus sine metu erroris judicare de illis
hominis liceat. Quin et reliqua, si modo aliquam
habeant ad hominem similitudinem, idonea sunt
ad aliquod suppeditandum.”

The coincidence between these last observations and the following passage from an anonymous writer, who seems to have made *comparative anatomy* his particular study, gives me much additional faith in their justness. “*The intention of na-*
ture,” (he observes,) can nowhere be so well learn-
 ed as from comparative anatomy ; that is, if we
 would understand physiology, and reason on the
 functions in the animal economy, we must see how
 the same end is brought about in other species.
 We must contemplate the part or organ in differ-
 ent animals, its shape, position, connection with
 the other parts, &c. and observe what thence
 arises. If we find ONE COMMON EFFECT con-
 stantly produced (though) in a very different way,
 then we may safely conclude that this is the USE
 or FUNCTION of the part. This reasoning can
 never betray us, if we are but sure of the facts.”*

* Letter prefixed to Monro’s *Comparative Anatomy*. London, 1744.

(The sequel of the above passage deserves also to be consulted.)

In comparing the anatomy of different tribes of animals we find that the differences we observe in their structure have a reference to their way of life, and the habits for which they are destined ; so that from knowing the latter we might be able, in particular cases, to frame conjectures *a priori* concerning the former. Thus all animals that live on vegetable food have their small guts considerably larger, and their great guts more capacious than such as feed on other animals. The latter again have their bladder more strong and muscular and less capacious than those that live on vegetable food, such as horses, cows, swine, &c. whose bladder of urine is perfectly membranous and very large. In both of these cases the differences have a manifest reference to the kinds of food on which the animal is to subsist.

“ In all animals” (says Cuvier, of whose high authority on physiological subjects I am always glad to avail myself, and whose indefatigable researches in comparative anatomy have shed a new blaze of light on the marks of systematical design in the animal kingdom,) “ in all animals the system of
“ digestive organs has direct relations to the organs
“ of motion and of sensation ; for the structure and
“ disposition of the digestive organs necessarily de-
“ termines the kind of aliment proper for every spe-
“ cies of animals ; and it is obvious, that, if the sen-
“ ses and organs of motion in any species of animals
“ be insufficient to distinguish and procure for
“ them their proper aliment, that species of animals
“ cannot subsist.

“ Thus, animals who can digest nothing but flesh
“ must, under the penalty of inevitable destruction,
“ be able to discern their prey at a distance, to pur-
“ sue it, to catch it, to get the better of it, to tear
“ it to pieces. They must, therefore, possess a
“ piercing eye, an acute sense of smell, swiftness in
“ pursuit, address and force in the organs for catch-
“ ing their prey. Accordingly, canine teeth, adapt-
“ ed to tear flesh, were never found in the same ani-
“ mal along with a hoof fit for supporting the weight
“ of the body, but totally unqualified for laying hold
“ of prey. Hence the rule that every hoofed ani-
“ mal is herbivorous ; and as corollaries from this
“ general principle, the maxims that a hoofed foot
“ indicates grinding teeth with flat surfaces, a long
“ alimentary canal, a large stomach, and often more
“ stomachs than one, with many other similar con-
“ sequences.

“ The same harmony subsists among the differ-
“ ent parts of the system of organs of motion. As
“ all the parts of this system act mutually, and are
“ acted upon, especially when the whole body of the
“ animal is in motion, the forms of all the different
“ parts are strictly related. There is hardly a bone
“ that can vary in its surfaces, in its curvatures, in
“ its protuberances, without corresponding varia-
“ tions in other bones ; and in this way a skilful
“ naturalist, from the appearance of a single bone,
“ will be often able to conclude, to a certain extent,

“ with respect to the form of the whole skeleton to
 “ which it belonged.” *

From the foregoing observations I hope it sufficiently appears that *design* may be inferred from its effects, and in particular, that design may be traced in various parts of the universe from an actual examination of the means which nature employs when she is evidently aiming at a certain end. I now proceed to consider more particularly the characters of this design as it is displayed in the universe ; or, in other words, to consider how far the design seems to indicate wisdom, and whether it seems to operate in conformity to *one* uniform plan. The first inquiry is useful by its tendency to elevate our conceptions of the Supreme Being, and the second is necessary for the demonstration of his unity. The first inquiry may perhaps seem to some to be involved in the preceding reasonings, but the case is otherwise ; for the words design and wisdom are by no means synonymous ; and it is possible that a philosopher may grant that there are marks of *design* in the universe, who thinks but meanly of the *wisdom* displayed in its formation. This was the case with King Alphonso when he ventured to censure the planetary system (according to the conceptions which astrono-

* Leçons d'Anatomie Comparée.

On these and various other instances of wise contrivance in the system of nature, more particularly in the frame of animated beings, much valuable instruction may be derived from an *Essay on Final Causes* by the Honourable Robert Boyle.

mers then entertained of it,) as a contrivance which admitted of important improvements. Distinct, however, as these two inquiries are, they have often been confounded by sceptical writers, who imagined that every little criticism they were able to make on the course of events, either in the physical or moral world, furnished an argument in favour of atheism.

I cannot help remarking, on the other hand, that the same distinction between *design* and *wisdom* has been overlooked by many of the excellent writers who have employed their genius in defending and illustrating the truths of natural religion. Of those who have speculated on the subject of final causes, the greater number seem plainly to have considered every new conjecture they were able to form concerning the ends and uses of the different objects composing the universe, and of the general laws by which its phenomena are regulated, as an additional proof that it is not the work of chance or necessity; and to have imagined that the greater the number of such *ends* and *uses* they were able to trace, the more irresistible they rendered the evidences of design and intelligence. But it appears to me that the evidences of *design* in the universe are alike obvious to the savage and to the philosopher; and that they are much more forcibly impressed on the minds of those whose understandings have been perverted by sceptical sophistry, by *general* views of nature, than by examining her works in detail. Or if any person should think otherwise, it must at least be granted that *any one*

organized and animated body furnishes just as complete evidence of this truth as could be obtained from the most accurate examination of all the different subjects of natural history. The proper use of such speculations is not to refute the atheist, but to illustrate the wisdom and the unity of design displayed in the material and moral worlds ; or rather to enlighten and exalt our own understandings, by tracing with humility and reverence the operations of a wisdom which is infinite and divine. If there be any principle whatever which a philosopher is entitled to take for granted, it is certainly this, that there are marks of design in the objects around us and in our own frame ; and to write large volumes in order to prove it is to offer an insult to human reason. In the observations, accordingly, which I have made on the subject, I have not thought it necessary for me to offer any positive evidences in support of this belief, but have only aimed at refuting the sceptical cavils by which some have attempted to weaken it. To those who had never read, or who were never likely to read, such metaphysical speculations as those of Mr Hume, I should not have thought of addressing one metaphysical argument ; satisfied as I am that disquisitions of this kind, however useful they may be in combating other disquisitions of a similar nature, can never add to the authority of the original laws of human belief. The science of abstruse learning I consider in the same light with an ingenious writer, who compares it to

“ Achilles’s spear, that healed the wounds it had
“ made before. It serves to repair the damage it-
“ self had occasioned, and this is perhaps all it is
“ good for. It casts no additional light upon the
“ paths of life, but disperses the clouds with which
“ it had overspread them before. It advances not
“ the traveller one step in his journey, but conducts
“ him back again to the spot from whence he
“ wandered.” *

I would not be understood by these remarks to detract from the merit of the authors to whom they refer. I only complain of the *form* in which they have presented their observations to the world, as demonstrations that a designing cause, or designing causes exist, and not as a humble attempt to display to those who are already impressed with this conviction, a few of those manifold indications of beneficent wisdom which the Author of all Things has been pleased for our instruction to place within the reach of our researches. Many of the observations which they have collected in the course of their inquiries are of inestimable value, but they have been frequently applied to an improper purpose, and hence very serious inconveniences have arisen. Among these inconveniences there are two of such magnitude that I think it of importance to state them explicitly.

1st, The size and number of the publications in question have led superficial thinkers to imagine that the existence of God was a truth which re-

* Mr Tucker, author of “ The Light of Nature Pursued.”

quired a multiplicity of proofs ; and in consequence of this apprehension they have found their faith in it rather weakened than confirmed. While, on the other hand, those who were already convinced of this truth have turned aside with disgust from the perusal of so tedious a demonstration, leading to so obvious a conclusion. No expedient more effectual could have been devised for destroying that interest which the mind spontaneously takes in the details of natural philosophy and natural history, than to state them merely as premises subservient to the proof of the most incontestible of all propositions. Whereas, if the existence of an Intelligent Cause be taken for granted, and if we study his works not as *proofs* of *design*, but as manifestations of his wisdom, and revelations of his will, these branches of knowledge open inexhaustible sources of instruction and of delight to the mind. In the works of God we study the operations of his wisdom and goodness, as we study in the conduct and discourse of our fellow-creatures the peculiarities of their genius and characters ; and, in proportion as our knowledge extends, we find our acquaintance with the plans of his Providence become more intimate, and our conceptions of his nature more elevated and sublime.

2d, When we accumulate a number of particular observations as proofs of the existence of an Intelligent Cause, we rest this important principle on a ground extremely open to the cavils of sceptics. In most cases, when we speculate concerning final

causes, we are unable to do more than to suppose and to conjecture, and we are extremely apt, by indulging imagination too far, to bring ridicule on the cause we mean to support. Sometimes too it has happened that conjectures, which at first appeared extremely plausible, have been afterwards discovered to proceed on a misapprehension of facts. Such accidents never fail to furnish matter of triumph to the sceptic, as if the mistakes to which our limited faculties are liable in studying the works of God afforded any just ground for ascribing them to chance, or to an unintelligent necessity.* But if, on the other hand, we acquiesce in those evidences of design, which a *general* survey of nature affords to the most common observer, the mistakes we may commit in the subsequent examination of her works, will have no effect in suggesting doubts or scruples with respect to the truths of religion ; but impressed with a firm conviction that nothing is made in vain, we will consider every difficulty we meet with

* Diderot seems to have thought, that *one* single defect in the universe in point of systematical order would conclude more strongly against the existence of the Deity, than all the relations yet observed among its different parts would prove in its favour. “ La nature imite, en se jouant, dans cent occasions, les productions d’art ; et l’on pourroit demander combien il faudroit remarquer de rapports dans un être, pour avoir un certitude complète qu’il est l’ouvrage d’un artiste. *En quelle occasion, un seul défaut de symmetrie prouveroit plus que toute somme donnée de rapports.*” (See the article *Beau* in the *Encyclopédie*.) This paradox is too extravagant to admit of a serious answer.

as a new lesson of humility to ourselves, and a new illustration of the unsearchable wisdom displayed in the universe.

I thought it proper to premise these general reflections to the remarks I am now to make, in order to point out the particular purpose to which I mean to apply them,—not as proofs that there exist designing and intelligent causes in nature, but as illustrations of that unity of design which connects together things the most remote and apparently insulated as parts of one system, and of that infinite wisdom which contrived and which superintends the whole.

A farther purpose may perhaps be answered by some of these remarks, if I am only able to state them in such a manner as to rouse the attention to those wonders *around* us and *within* us, which are apt to lose their effect in consequence of long familiarity. “*Assiduitate quotidiana*” (says Cicero) “*et consuetudine oculorum, assuescunt animi : neque admirantur, neque requirunt rationes earum rerum, quas semper vident : proinde quasi novitas nos magis quàm magnitudo rerum debeat ad exquirendas causas excitare.*” * And to the same purpose the poet :

“*Hunc solem et stellas et decedentia certis*
 “*Tempora momentis, sunt qui formidine nullâ*
 “*Imbuti spectent.*”

In such cases it is not necessary to teach men to *reason*, but to teach them to *attend* ; to induce them to reflect on the objects and events which are daily

* De Nat. Deor. II. xxxviii.

presented to their view, and to listen to the natural suggestions of their own understandings. The supposition which Cicero quotes from Aristotle in speaking on this very subject is finely imagined. “Præclare Aristoteles, si essent (inquit) qui sub
 “terra semper habitavissent, bonis et illustribus do-
 “miciliis, quæ essent ornata signis atque picturis,
 “instructaque rebus iis omnibus, quibus abundant
 “ii, qui beati putantur, nec tamen exissent umquam
 “supra terram; accepissent autem fama et audi-
 “tione, esse quoddam numen et vim Deorum: dein-
 “de aliquo tempore, patefactis terræ faucibus, ex
 “illis abditis sedibus evadere in hæc loca, quæ nos
 “incolimus, atque exire potuissent: cùm repentè
 “terram et maria cælumque vidissent: nubium
 “magnitudinem, ventorumque vim cognovissent,
 “adspexissentque solem, ejusque tum magnitudi-
 “nem pulchritudinemque tum etiam efficientiam
 “cognovissent, quod is diem efficeret, toto cælo luce
 “diffusa: cum autem terras nox opacasset, tum
 “cælum totum cernerent astris distinctum et or-
 “natum, lunæque luminum varietatem, tum cre-
 “scentis, tum senescentis, eorumque omnium ortus et
 “occasus, atque in omni æternitate ratos immuta-
 “bilesque cursus: hæc cum viderent, profectò et
 “esse Deos, et hæc tanta opera Deorum esse arbi-
 “trarentur.” *

The following considerations (the greater part of which I must content myself with barely mention-

* De Nat. Deor. II. xxxvii.

ing) tend chiefly to illustrate the wisdom and unity of design manifested in the universe, from a view of the relations which different parts of nature bear to each other, and from the concurrence of things apparently unconnected and even remote, in promoting the same benevolent purposes.

(1.) Adaptation of the bodies and of the instincts of animals to the laws of the material world. Of the organs of respiration, for example, and of the instinct of suction to the properties of the atmosphere ; of the sensibility of the eye to the *momentum* of light, and of the structure of that organ to the laws of refraction ; of the size and strength of animals and vegetables to the laws of gravitation and of cohesion.

I mentioned in the first place, the adaptation of the organs of respiration, and of the instinct of suction to the properties of the atmosphere. On this *relation* some ingenious reflections occur in the excellent work of Dr Paley, in which he has very properly laid great stress on the *period* when these organs were formed,—a period when no communication existed between the lungs and the atmosphere, and when, of course, their structure bore a reference to an order of things which was yet FUTURE. The passage I allude to forms a part of Chap. 14, entitled, of Prospective Contrivances.

I mentioned *secondly*, the adaptation of the *retina* to the *momentum* of light, one of the most astonishing facts (I may venture to assert) that falls

within the sphere of our observation. Nor will this assertion appear extravagant to those who reflect for a moment, on one hand, upon the structure of the organ, which is incomparably more delicate than that of any other part of the body ; and, on the other hand, on the astonishing velocity of light which carries it at the rate of about *two hundred thousand miles in a second* of time ; that is, nearly a *million* of times greater than the velocity of a cannon ball. How inconceivably small must its particles be, and how nicely must their quantity of matter be adjusted to their velocity to produce a momentum sufficient to affect the sensitive power of the retina without injuring *that* or any other part of the eye ! How beautifully is the same organ adapted to that property of light, in consequence of which it alters its course when it passes obliquely from one medium into another of different density, insomuch that the course of the visual rays through the humours of the eye, till they paint the image on the retina, may be traced on the same dioptrical principles on which we explain the theory of the telescope and the microscope ! This view of the mechanism of the eye appears more peculiarly striking, when we consider, as we just now did in the organs of respiration, the formation of the organ of sight in the womb of the mother, at a period when no communication exists between it and that element to which all its various parts have so manifest a reference. *

* See Dr Paley's Natural Theology, p. 277.

The last relation which I mentioned is that between the size and strength of animals and vegetables, and the laws of gravitation and cohesion. A very few slight remarks will suffice for the illustration of this instance of design, and of the inference which I wish to draw from the fact.

It is observed by Galileo that in similar bodies, engines and animals, the greater are more liable to accident than the less, and have a less relative strength in proportion to their magnitude. A greater column, for example, is in much greater danger of being broke by a fall than a similar small one. A man is in greater danger from accidents of this kind than a child. To account for this he shows that in similar bodies of the same texture the force which tends to break them increases in the greater bodies in a higher proportion than the force which tends to preserve them entire. It is owing to this, he observes, that what succeeds very well in a model is often found to fall to pieces by its own weight when it comes to be executed on a larger scale. From these principles it follows that there are necessarily limits in the works both of nature and art which they cannot surpass in magnitude. It is possible to conceive trees of so great a size that their branches should fall by their own weight. The larger animals (we know from the fact *) have

* “ In the large sized animals, such as the bull and the elephant, the thickness both of their bones and muscles bears a greater proportion to the length of their limbs, than in the smaller animals, and they are therefore of a less elegant form.

not strength in proportion to their size ; and if their size were much increased they would not only be exposed to perpetual accidents, but would in a great measure lose their power of motion.*

Under this head, too, we may remark the relation which the size of the human body bears to that of the other animals. There is a certain *common scale* on which man and the other animals that minister to his necessities seem to have been made, and which could not be departed from to any great extent without inconvenience ; so that if the size of the human body were rendered either much larger or much smaller than it is, (that of other animals remaining the same,) the beautiful harmony of the globe would be in so far disturbed.

“ Had man been of a stature much less than he enjoys,” (says Sir Gilbert Blane in his Lecture on Muscular Motion,) “ he would not have possessed sufficient power over external objects to act up to those superior faculties of mind with which he is endowed. If nature had conferred on man only one half of his actual stature and strength, with

“ But nature has not carried this so far as to compensate for the disadvantage arising from the increase of size ; for the greater animals have not the same proportional strength in relation to their bulk that the smaller animals have. It has been computed, (Haller’s Elem. Physiolog. Chap. ix. Sect. 2,) that a flea can draw from seventy to eighty times its own weight, whereas a horse cannot with ease draw more than three times his own weight.”—Sir Gilbert Blane’s Lect. on Muscular Motion.

* Muschenbroek, Dissert. Phys. et Math. p. 560.

“ the same powers of reason, we may venture to
 “ affirm that he would not have carried his domi-
 “ nion over the globe to the same extent. As he is
 “ now constituted, his force is commensurate with
 “ things external.”

These remarks may serve as an answer to the following questions of *Lucretius*.

Denique cur homines tantos natura parare
 Non potuit, pedibus qui pontum per vada possent
 Transire, et magnos manibus divellere montes? *

Indeed the same answer was long ago given to this question by an English naturalist of the seventeenth century, (Dr Nehemiah Grew.) “ No other
 “ cause” (he observes) “ can be assigned why a man
 “ was not made five or ten times bigger, but his
 “ *relation* to the rest of the universe.”

(2.) Adaptation of the bodies and instincts of animals to those particular climates and districts of the earth for which they are destined.—Of this remark I cannot recollect a better illustration than the following description of the *camel* by Dr Robertson.

“ In the habitable parts of both Asia and Africa
 “ some of the most fertile districts are separated
 “ from each other by such extensive tracts of barren
 “ sands as seem to exclude the possibility of com-
 “ munication between them. In all these districts
 “ of Asia and Africa, where deserts are most frequent

* Lib. I. l. 200.

“ and extensive, the camel abounds. This is his
“ proper station, and beyond this the sphere of his
“ action does not extend far. He dreads alike the
“ excesses of heat and cold, and does not agree even
“ with the mild climate of our temperate zone. It
“ is scarcely necessary for me to mention how beau-
“ tifully this extraordinary animal is adapted to the
“ particular station he occupies on the globe, by his
“ persevering strength, by his moderation in the
“ use of food, and by that singularity in his anato-
“ mical structure which enables him to lay in a stock
“ of water sufficient for several days.—‘In travelling
“ through the desert’ (says Mr Volney) ‘camels are
“ chiefly employed, because they consume little and
“ carry a great load. His ordinary burden is about
“ seven hundred and fifty pounds. His food what-
“ ever is given him, straw, thistles, the stones of
“ dates, bran, barley, &c. With a pound of food
“ and as much water he will travel for weeks. In
“ the journey from Cairo to Suez, which is forty or
“ forty-six hours, they neither eat nor drink; but
“ these long fasts, if repeated often, wear them out.
“ Their usual rate of travelling is very slow, hardly
“ above two miles an hour. It is vain to push them,
“ they will not quicken their pace; but if allowed
“ some short rest they will travel fifteen hours
“ a-day.’” *

* Of the natural economy of this animal, (which the Arabians call the ship of the desert,) and also of the mode in which he is trained by the art of man to his life of hardship and exertion, a particular account may be found in Buffon, Art. *Chameau et Dromadaire*.

(3.) The relations which animals and vegetables bear to each other; the latter furnishing to the former salutary food in their healthful state, and useful remedies in the case of disease.

It will perhaps be said that these relations are the effect of accident; that the number of plants is infinite; and that it is not surprising that among this variety experience should discover to us a few which have certain relations to the animal kingdom. But admitting this mode of reasoning to be good, what shall we say to those instincts which, independently of experience, direct an animal to its proper food, and to those remedies which are suited to its various diseases? The former circumstance is matter of daily remark, and the latter is well known to be equally certain.

(4.) The relations which different tribes of animals have to each other, one tribe being the natural prey of another, and each of them having their instruments of offence or defence provided accordingly.

(5.) The relations which the periodical instincts of migratory animals bear to the state of the season, and to such animal or vegetable productions in distant parts of the globe, as are destined to be their food. *

This view of the subject is peculiarly striking,

* Ray, p. 128.

when we consider the relations which almost all the parts of the universe bear to man. That our *faculties* are admirably adapted to our external circumstances has been often observed, particularly by Mr Locke in the following passage :

“ The infinitely wise Contriver of us, and of all
“ things about us, hath fitted our senses, faculties,
“ and organs to the conveniences of life, and to the
“ business we have to do here. We are able by our
“ senses to know and distinguish things, and to ex-
“ amine them so far as to apply them to our uses,
“ and several ways to accommodate the exigencies
“ of this life. We have insight enough into their
“ admirable contrivances and wonderful effects, to
“ admire and magnify the wisdom, power, and good-
“ ness of their Author. But it appears not that God
“ intended we should have a perfect, clear, and ade-
“ quate knowledge of them ; that perhaps is not in
“ the comprehension of any finite being. We are fur-
“ nished with faculties (dull and weak as they are)
“ to discover enough in the creatures to lead us to
“ the knowledge of the Creator, and the knowledge
“ of our duty ; and we are fitted well enough with
“ abilities to provide for the conveniences of living ;
“ —these are our business in this world. But were
“ our senses altered and made much quicker and
“ acuter, the appearance and outward scheme of
“ things would have quite another face to us, and
“ I am apt to think would be inconsistent with our
“ being, or at least well-being, in this part of the
“ universe which we inhabit. He that considers

“ how little our constitution is able to bear a remove
“ into parts of this air, not much higher than that
“ we commonly breathe in, will have reason to be
“ satisfied that in this globe of earth allotted for our
“ mansion, the all-wise Architect has suited our or-
“ gans, and the bodies that are to affect them, one
“ to another. If our sense of *hearing* were but one
“ thousand times quicker than it is, how would a
“ perpetual noise distract us ; and we should in the
“ quietest retirement be less able to sleep or medi-
“ tate than in the middle of a sea-fight. Nay, if
“ that most instructive of our senses, *seeing*, were in
“ any man a thousand, or a hundred thousand times
“ more acute than it is now by the best microscope,
“ things several millions of times less than the small-
“ est object of his sight now, would then be visible
“ to his naked eyes, and so he would come nearer the
“ discovery of the texture and motion of the minute
“ parts of corporeal things, and in many of them
“ probably get ideas of their internal constitutions ;
“ but then he would be in a quite different world
“ from other people,—nothing would appear the same
“ to him and others,—the visible ideas of everything
“ would be different ; so that I doubt whether he
“ and the rest of men could discourse concerning the
“ objects of sight, or have any communication
“ about colours, their appearances being so wholly
“ different ; and perhaps such a quickness and ten-
“ derness of sight could not endure bright sunshine,
“ or so much as open day light, nor take in but a
“ very small part of any object at once, and that

“ too only at a very near distance. And if, by the
“ help of such microscopical eyes, (if I may so call
“ them,) a man should penetrate farther than ordi-
“ nary into the secret composition and radical tex-
“ ture of bodies, he would not make any great ad-
“ vantage by the change, if such an acute sight
“ would not serve to conduct him to the market
“ and exchange, if he could not see things he was
“ to avoid at a convenient distance, or distinguish
“ things he was to do with, by those sensible quali-
“ ties others do. He that was sharp-sighted enough
“ to see the configuration of the minute particles of
“ the spring of a clock, and observe on what pecu-
“ liar structure and impulse its elastic motion de-
“ pends, would no doubt discover something very
“ admirable ; but if eyes so framed could not view
“ at once the hand and the characters of the hour-
“ plate, and thereby discover at a distance what
“ o’clock it was, their owner could not be much be-
“ nefited by that acuteness, which, whilst it disco-
“ vered the secret contrivance of the parts of the
“ machine, made him lose its use.” *

Nor is it merely our perceptive faculties which have a reference to our situation. The external objects with which we are surrounded are so accommodated to our capacities of enjoyment, and the relations which exist between our frame and that of external nature are so numerous, in comparison of what we perceive in the case of other animals, as to authorize us to conclude, that it was chiefly with a

* Locke’s Works, Vol. II, p. 15, *et seq.*

view to our happiness and improvement that the arrangements of this lower world were made. The subject is so infinite that I should lose myself if I attempted any illustration of it. I shall content myself with mentioning the innumerable relations between our senses, and the natural objects with which we are surrounded ; between the smell and the perfumes of the vegetable world ; between the taste and the endless profusion of luxuries which the earth, the air, and the waters afford ; between the ear and the melodies of the birds ; between the eye and all the beauties and glories of the visible creation. There is something I think peculiarly remarkable in the adaptation of the music of birds to the human ear. It seems to give pleasure to none of the quadrupeds ; nor is it even certain if the music of one species of birds gives pleasure to another ; for it has been asserted by some late naturalists,* that those of them who are most remarkable for their powers of imitation, (the linnet for example,) are as apt to imitate sounds which are harsh and disagreeable as the most exquisite tones of music. But man receives pleasure from them all, and the variety of their notes would seem almost to have been bestowed on them to form a concert for the gratification of his ear.

Up springs the lark,
Shrill voic'd and loud, the messenger of morn ;
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounting sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts

* Particularly by the late Honourable Daines Barrington.

Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush
Bending with dewy moisture, o'er the heads
Of the coy quiristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush
And woodlark, o'er the kind contending throng
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length
Of notes ; when listening Philomela deigns
To let them joy, and purposes in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake,
The mellow bulfinch answers from the grove ;
Nor are the linnets, o'er the flowery furze
Pour'd out profusely, silent. Join'd to these
Innumerable songsters, in the fresh'ning shade
Of new sprung leaves, their modulations mix
Mellifluous. The jay, the rook, the daw,
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert, while the stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur through the whole.

Some naturalists have taken notice, as a curious circumstance, of that instinct which attracts the different tribes of singing birds to the habitations of men. If there is a cottage in a forest they all assemble in its neighbourhood. A very ingenious author, M. de St Pierre, tells us that he travelled more than six hundred leagues in the forests of Russia without seeing any small birds, excepting in the neighbourhood of the villages. He mentions likewise, that when he was in Russian Finland he sometimes travelled twenty leagues in a day without meeting either with villages or birds. Wherever they perceived the latter they were sure that they were near an

inhabited country. Garcilasso de la Vega informs us, that his father, having been detached from Peru with a company of Spaniards to make discoveries beyond the Cordilleras, was in danger of perishing from hunger amidst their valleys and quagmires, till at last he perceived a flight of parrots, which made him suspect that he was near the habitations of men. He accordingly followed the direction in which they flew, and came at last, after incredible hardships, to an Indian settlement.

It has also been observed that the musical powers of which I have been speaking are confined to the birds which inhabit the fields and the woods. They would have been thrown away on those tribes which frequent the ocean, not only as they are removed from the ordinary haunts of men, but as the songs which are the most pleasing to the ear would have been lost amidst the noise of that turbulent element. Such birds have in general a piercing scream, by which they are enabled to make themselves mutually heard, notwithstanding the noise of the wind and waters. *

There is another view of nature, which tends remarkably to illustrate that unity of design in the universe which is the foundation of our belief of the unity of God ; to trace the *analogies* which are observable in the structure of different tribes of animals, and even between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms ; or to trace the *analogy* which is

* Les Etudes de la Nature, &c. Tom. III. p. 70.

observable among many of the laws of nature in the material world.

(1.) Of the analogy in the anatomical structure of different tribes of animals, the following passage of Buffon contains a very pleasing illustration.

“ Take the skeleton of a man, incline the bones of the pelvis, shorten those of the thighs, legs, and arms ; join the phalanges of the fingers and toes ; lengthen the jaws by shortening the frontal bones ; and lastly, extend the spine of the back. This skeleton would no longer represent that of a man, it would be the skeleton of a horse. For by lengthening the back bone and the jaws the number of the vertebræ, ribs, and teeth would be increased, and it is only by the number of these bones, and by the prolongation, contraction, and junction of others, that the skeleton of a horse differs from that of a man. The ribs which are essential to the figure of animals are found equally in men, in quadrupeds, in birds, in fishes, and even in the turtle. The foot of the horse, so apparently different from the hand of man, is composed of similar bones, and at the extremity of each finger we have the same small bone resembling the shoe of a horse which bounds the foot of that animal. Raise the skeletons of quadrupeds, from the ape kind to the mouse, upon their hind legs, and compare them with the skeleton of a man, the mind will be instantly struck with the uniformity of structure and design observed in

“ the formation of the whole group. This unifor-
“ mity is so constant, and the gradations from one
“ species to another are so imperceptible, that to
“ discover the marks of their discrimination requires
“ the most minute attention. Even the bones of
“ the tail will make but a slight impression on the
“ observer. The tail is only a prolongation of the
“ *os coccygis*, or rump bone, which is short in man.
“ The ourang-outang and true apes have no tail,
“ and in the baboon and several other quadrupeds
“ the tail is exceedingly short. Thus, in the crea-
“ tion of animals the Supreme Being seems to have
“ employed only one great idea, and at the same
“ time to have diversified it in every possible man-
“ ner, that man might have an opportunity of ad-
“ miring equally the magnificence of the execution,
“ and the simplicity of the design.” *

(2.) A further instance of the same unity of design occurs in the analogy between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms. It is sufficient to mention this without any comment, as it has been matter of common remark in all ages of the world, and has furnished to poets many of their most interesting and agreeable images. In modern times it has attracted the attention of some of our most eminent philosophers, who have not only availed themselves of its assistance as a principle of botanical classification, but have connected it with some very curious

* Smellie's Translation of Buffon's Natural History.

speculations concerning the order and economy of nature.

(3.) To all this we may add the analogy among many of the phenomena and laws of the material world ; a satisfactory proof of which may be derived from the effects which philosophical habits and scientific pursuits have in familiarizing the mind to the order of nature, and in improving its penetration and sagacity in anticipating those parts of it which are yet unknown. A man conversant with the phenomena of physics and chemistry is much more likely than a stranger to these studies to form probable conjectures concerning those laws of nature which still remain to be examined. There is a certain *style* (if I may use the expression) in the operations of the Great Author of all Things ; something which everywhere announces, amidst a boundless variety of detail, an inimitable unity and harmony of design ; and in the perception of which, what we commonly call *philosophical sagacity* seems chiefly to consist. It is this which bestows an inestimable value on the conjectures and queries of such a philosopher as Sir Isaac Newton.

This view of *the unity of design* displayed in the works of creation becomes more peculiarly impressive when we consider that evidences of it may be traced as far as the inquiries of philosophers have hitherto reached. The ancients in general supposed that the phenomena of the heavens were regulated by laws perfectly unlike those which obtain

within the circle of our experience, although I have somewhere met with the following maxim, which I think was ascribed to the Persian Magi—συμπαρόη̃ εἶναι τὰ ἀνω τοῖς κατω.

The modern discoveries have shown clearly that this really is the case ; and indeed it was a conjecture *a priori* that this probably was true, that led the way to the doctrine of gravitation. Every subsequent discovery has confirmed and extended the truth. It has been found that comets in their most distant excursions from the sun continue subject to this law, and that, by attending to the various disturbances of their motions arising from their gravitation to the planets, the periods of their return to the planetary regions may be predicted within astonishingly narrow limits. It has been found that the same law extends to that telescopical planet which has been lately discovered to belong to our system, and the quantity of matter it contains has been computed from the motion of its satellites by an application of a theory founded on the most familiar of all the facts we know, that a heavy body on our earth when projected into the air descends again to the ground.

Nor is it only the more general laws of terrestrial bodies which extend to the more remote parts of the universe. There is some ground for suspecting that the particular arrangements of things on the surfaces of the different planets are not wholly unlike those which we observe on our own. I before took notice of that relation which the size and

strength of animals and vegetables seem to bear to the laws of gravitation and cohesion. Supposing, then, the other planets to be furnished with animals and vegetables similar to those on the surface of our earth, and supposing at the same time the same laws of cohesion and of other attractions which obtain here to extend over our system, it was necessary that the force of gravity at the surfaces of the different planets should not differ very widely from one standard. Now, as we find from the fact, contrary to all expectation, that at the surfaces of the planets which differ from each other the most in magnitude, there is a wonderfully narrow limit within which the force of gravity varies, is it not a natural inference that they are fitted for the accommodation of animated beings not very different from those with which we are acquainted? At the surface of Jupiter, though he be several hundred times greater than our earth, the force of gravity is little more than double of that of terrestrial bodies; and at the surface of Saturn it is only about one-fourth greater than at the surface of the earth. *

Amusing and interesting as these physical speculations may be to the mind, it is still more delightful to trace that uniformity of design which obtains in the moral world. To compare the arts of human life with the instincts of the brutes, and the instincts of the different tribes of brutes with each other; and to remark, amidst the wonderful variety of means which are employed to accomplish

* Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, B. iii. ch. 5. § 5.

the same ends, a certain analogy characterize them all ; or to observe in the minds of different individuals of our own species the workings of the same affections and passions, manifesting among men of every age and of every country the kindred features of humanity. It is this which gives the great charm to what we call *nature* in epic and dramatic compositions ; when the poet speaks a language to which every heart is an echo, and which, amidst all the effects of education and fashion in modifying and disguising the principles of our constitution, reminds all the various classes of readers or of spectators of the existence of those moral ties which unite us to each other, and to our common Parent.

I have only to add farther, before leaving this subject, that the various remarks and reasonings which I have offered on the two general principles of our nature formerly mentioned, are not to be considered as forming any part of the argument for the existence of God, which, as I already said, is an immediate and necessary consequence of these principles. What I had in view was, not to confirm this important truth by reasoning, but to obviate the sceptical cavils which have been raised against it. When the principles of our nature are allowed to follow their own course without being diverted from it by the prejudices of superstition or of false philosophy, they produce their proper effect on the mind of the uncultivated savage, as much as of the enlightened citizen. “ How do you know,” (said a traveller to a poor Arab of the desert,) “ that there

“ is a God ?”—“ In the same manner,” (he replied,) “ that I trace the footsteps of an animal by the “ prints which it leaves upon the sand.”—“ Is it “ not fitting,” (said a savage of Sumatra to his companion, showing him a watch that had been made in Europe,) “ that a people such as we should “ be the slaves of a nation capable of forming such “ a machine ? The sun,” (he added,) “ is a machine of the same nature.”—“ And who winds “ him up ?” said his companion.—“ Who,” (replied he,) “ but Allah !” *

If any exception to the universality of these religious impressions among mankind is to be found, it is not among savages we are to look for it, but in populous and commercial and artificial societies of men, where the voice of nature is drowned amid the bustle of business, or the hurry of dissipation ; where our earliest and most susceptible years are passed among the productions of human art, and the attention is diverted from those physical appearances, which are stamped with the obvious marks of Divine power and wisdom. Nothing, in truth, banishes moral impressions from the thoughts so much as the artificial objects with which we are every where surrounded in populous and cultivated countries, particularly in large commercial cities ; because the curiosity is too deeply engrossed by the productions of human skill and industry to have leisure to follow its *natural* direction. Hence it is that such impressions, however long banished from the mind,

* Marsden's History of Sumatra.

never fail to revive when we retire from the haunts of men to converse with nature in solitude. What we call the *love of nature* is in fact the love and admiration of the Deity. The enthusiasm with which some men survey the endless vicissitudes which the spectacle of the universe exhibits, is nothing else than the devotional temper moderated and repressed by the slight veil which sensible objects interpose between us and their author. In those deep and savage recesses where human art has never trod this veil is in some measure removed ; every thing around us appears unchanged and fresh from the hand of the Creator, and we seem to be conscious of his more immediate presence.

PRÆSENTIOREM et conspicimus Deum
 Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
 Clivosque præruptos, sonantes
 Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem ;
 Quam si repostus sub trabe citreâ
 Fulgeret auro, et Phidiacâ manu.

SECTION III.

Conclusion of the Argument for the Existence of God.

The observations which have been made not only establish the *existence* of a Deity, but contain the evidences of his unity, of his power, and of his wisdom. Of these we justly say that they are *infinite* ; that is, that our imagination can set no bounds to

them, and that our conceptions of them always rise in proportion as our own faculties are cultivated and enlarged, and as our knowledge of the universe becomes more extensive. Some of the earlier and more scholastic of our modern writers on natural religion give a long enumeration of what they call the *Divine Attributes*, which they divide into the *natural, the intellectual, and the moral*. Under the first head, they comprehend the unity of the Deity, his self-existence, his spirituality, his omnipotence, his immutability, his eternity ;—under the second, his knowledge and his wisdom ; and under the third, his justice and his goodness ; and of all these attributes they treat in a systematical manner. I own I do not approve of this view of the subject ; or at least I do not think I could adopt it with advantage here ; I shall therefore confine myself to a few observations on the evidences of the *Divine goodness and justice*, those attributes which render the Deity the proper object of religious worship and adoration.

Before, however, entering on this subject, I think it proper to take notice of the historical question concerning the priority of monotheism or of polytheism, in the order of human investigation. I shall afterwards collect together a few miscellaneous remarks which in the course of this chapter escaped my recollection while treating of those heads under which they ought to have been introduced. For the sake of greater distinctness I shall divide the section into two parts.

PART I.

With respect to the priority of Monotheism or Polytheism, two opinions on the question have been proposed. The one supposes *monotheism* to be agreeable to the first suggestions of the mind, and *polytheism* to result from a combination of the conclusions formed by different persons in different situations. The other supposes polytheism to arise necessarily from those partial conceptions of the universe, to which our faculties are limited in the infancy of reason and experience, and monotheism to be the slow and gradual result of more enlarged and philosophical views. The former opinion is supported by Mr Ferguson, in his "Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy;" the latter by Mr Hume, in his "Natural History of Religion."

"In every nation or tribe" (says Ferguson) "the providence of God was supposed to take its character from the circumstances in which it was employed. In maritime situations the Deity was conceived as monarch of the sea, and director of storms. Within land he was conceived as the patron of husbandmen and of shepherds, the ruler of seasons, and the power on which man must depend for the increase of his herds, and for the returns of his harvest."

"In no instance, perhaps, did the people of any one description or determinate manner of life originally conceive more than one God. But the

“ accounts of what different nations believed, when
“ collated together, seemed to make up a catalogue
“ of separate deities ; and what every nation apart
“ intended for one, when reports were accumulated
“ from different quarters, was mistaken for many.

“ The spirit with which these reports of a God
“ acknowledged in one nation, different from the
“ God who was acknowledged in another, were mu-
“ tually received by their respective votaries, was
“ various in different instances.

“ In some instances the pretensions of one Deity
“ were supposed to be consistent with those of an-
“ other, and the Gods reconcilable. Upon this
“ supposition every nation worshipped its own,
“ without any supposed disparagement to the God
“ of its neighbour, and without animosity to his
“ worshippers.

“ In other instances pretensions were considered
“ as inconsistent ; deities were stated as rival
“ powers ; and nations waged continual war under
“ the banners of their respective gods.”*

On the other hand, it is maintained by Hume, (and I confess I think with much more probability,) that theism is the slow result of philosophical views of the universe—connecting different physical events together as parts of *one* system conspiring to *one* end ; and that as long as we attend to detached and insulated appearances only, polytheism offers itself as the most natural creed ; leading men to apprehend *one* God of the winds, another of the waters,

* Vol. I. p. 169.

a third of the woods, &c. presiding over and communicating motion to the different parts of the material world. The prevalence of polytheism in the world is a proof of this ; and I have little doubt that this would have continued to be the religion of the multitude in all countries, had not the idolatrous tendency of the uninformed understanding been corrected by the light of Divine revelation. *

When I speak, however, of the prevalence of polytheism in the world, I would be always understood to mean its prevalence among the *multitude* ; for it is more than probable, that in all ages and countries there have been *some* individuals whose minds were enlightened by the simple and sublime

* Two very high authorities, however, may be quoted in favour of the opposite opinion, Sir Isaac Newton and Sir William Jones. “ The primeval religion of *Iran*,” (says the last of these writers,) “ was that which Newton calls the *oldest* “ (and it may justly be called the noblest) of all religions ; a “ firm belief that one Supreme God made the world by his “ power, and continually governed it by his providence ; a “ pious fear, love, and adoration of him ; a due reverence for “ parents and aged persons ; a fraternal affection for the whole “ human species ; and a compassionate tenderness even for the “ brute creation.”—(Jones’s Dissertation on the Persians.)

Does not the purity and sublimity of this creed, both in its theological and ethical principles, suppose a degree of cultivation, both intellectual and moral, altogether incompatible with the condition of man in the earlier stages of society ? The passage, however, is nobly conceived, and beautifully expressed, and contains, I have little doubt, a faithful description of the religious sentiments of many wise and good men in the heathen world.

belief of the unity of God. Thus, among the ancient Greeks and Romans, although the established religion and the popular persuasion was undoubtedly polytheism, the clearest evidence may be produced that the philosophical creed was very different. The most enlightened writers indeed frequently expressed themselves in conformity to vulgar prejudices; and many of them probably *believed* that there exist a variety of beings superior to man, who have an influence over human affairs, but who act in subordination to the will of the Supreme God. This belief is not to be confounded with polytheism; for it is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of the unity of the Deity to suppose that he sometimes acts by subordinate ministers. The frequent application which the classical writers make of the word *Deus* is apt to mislead us upon this subject; but that word conveyed to the Romans a very different idea from what we annex to the corresponding word in our language. Sometimes they employed it to express the Supreme Being; sometimes subordinate minds acting in obedience to his will. In the following sentence it is used in both these senses. “*Deos* alios in terra, alios in luna, “ alios in reliquis mundi partes spargens, *Deus* quasi “ serebat.” *

That the unity of the Deity was the philosophical belief among the Romans, appears from the testi-

* Cicero quoted by Bolingbroke. Phil. Works, Vol. V. p. 264.

mony of their most eminent writers. The following passages are from the works of Cicero.

“ Princeps ille Deus, qui omnem hunc mundum
 “ regit, sicut animus humanus id corpus cui præpo-
 “ situs est.* Nec vero Deus ipse alio modo intelli-
 “ potest, nisi mens soluta quædam et libera, segre-
 “ gata ab omni concretione mortali, omnia sentiens
 “ et movens.† Esse præstantem aliquam æternam-
 “ que naturam, et eam suspiciendam admirandam-
 “ que hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi ordo-
 “ que rerum cœlestium cogit confiteri.‡ Omnes
 “ gentes una lex, et sempiterna et immortalis conti-
 “ nebit; unusque erit, quasi magister et imperator
 “ omnium, Deus.” §

Seneca expressly informs us that all the different names given by the Romans to the Deity were only to be considered as descriptive of the different characters in which he appears to us from his works.

“ Quid aliud est Natura, quam Deus et Divina Ra-
 “ tio toti mundo et partibus ejus inserta? Quoties
 “ voles, tibi licet aliter hunc auctorem rerum nostra-
 “ rum compellare; et Jovem illum optimum et maxi-
 “ mum ritè dices, et tonantem et statorem. Hunc
 “ eundem et fatum si dixeris, non mentieris; nam
 “ cum fatum nihil aliud sit quam series implexa
 “ causarum, ille est prima omnium causa ex quâ
 “ cæteræ pendent. Quæcunque voles illi nomina
 “ proprie aptabis, vim aliquam effectumque cœlestium
 “ rerum continentia: tot appellationes ejus possunt

* *Somnium Scip.* § 3.

† *Tusc. Quæst. Lib. i.*

‡ *De Divin. Lib. ii.*

§ *Frag. Lib. iii. De Repub.*

“esse, quot munera;” * and in another place; “Ne hoc
 “quidem crediderunt (antiqui) Jovem, qualem in ca-
 “pitolio et in cæteris ædibus colimus, mittere manu
 “fulmina; sede eundem, quem nos, Jovem intelligunt:
 “custodem rectoremque universi; animum ac spiri-
 “tum mundani hujus operis dominum et artificem;
 “cui nomen omne convenit.” †

I shall only add to these passages the following quotation from the *Isis and Osiris* of Plutarch.
 “Care should be taken not to transform, dissolve,
 “and scatter the Divine Nature into rivers, winds,
 “vegetables, or bodily forms and motions. This
 “would be as ridiculous as to imagine that the sails,
 “the cables, the rigging, and the anchor, are the
 “pilot, or that the thread, the shuttle, and the woof,
 “are the weaver. Such senseless notions are an
 “indignity to the heavenly powers, whom they
 “blaspheme, while they give the name of Gods to
 “beings of an insensible, inanimate, and corrup-
 “tible nature.”—“Nothing that is without a soul,
 “nothing that is material, and to be perceived by
 “our senses, can be God. Nor yet must we ima-
 “gine that there are different Gods, according to
 “the different countries of Greeks and barbarians,
 “northern and southern nations. As the sun is
 “common to all the world, though called by diffe-
 “rent names in different places, so there is but one
 “sole Supreme Mind or Reason, and one and the
 “same Providence that governs the world, though

* De Ben. Lib. iv. Cap. 7. † Nat. Quæst. Lib. ii. Cap. 45.

“ he is worshipped under different names, and has
“ appointed some inferior powers for his ministers.”

Nor is it only the *philosophers* of antiquity who thought in this manner. It is justly observed by the Chevalier Ramsay, that “ whoever reads Homer and Virgil with a proper attention will see, “ that, notwithstanding the wild flights of their “ imagination, and the indecent allegories by which “ they sometimes dishonour the Divine Nature, there “ is one general principle running through all their “ fables, that there is one Supreme God, whom they “ everywhere call the Father, and the Sovereign “ Lord of Gods and Men, the Architect of the “ World, and the Prince and Governor of the Universe.”—“ Poetry” (says this author) “ deifies all “ the various parts of nature, and gives spirits to “ bodies, as well as body to spirits. It expresses “ the operations and properties of matter by the “ actions and passions of such invisible powers as “ the pagans supposed to be directors of all the motions and events that we see in the universe. “ The poets pass in a moment from allegory to the “ literal sense, and from the literal sense to allegory ; from real Gods to fabulous deities ; and this “ occasions that jumble in their images, that absurdity in their fictions, and that indecorum in their “ expressions, which are so justly condemned by “ the philosophers. Notwithstanding, however, “ this multiplication of inferior deities, the poets “ of antiquity in general believed that there is but “ one only Supreme God.” Of this assertion very

strong proofs are produced by Ramsay in his discourse on the Theology of the Pagans, annexed to his *Travels of Cyrus*. The following passages deserve to be added to those he has quoted.

Accipite ergo animis ; atque hæc mea figite dicta,
Quæ Phœbo pater omnipotens, mihi Phœbus Ápollo
Prædixit, vobis Furiarum ego maxima pando.*

Upon which verses *Servius* remarks, that even Apollo (he who among the pagan deities was in chief esteem for his prophetic knowledge) is said to derive his knowledge from the Supreme Being. “Notandum Apollinem quæ dicit à Jove cognoscere.”

Scimus ut impios
Titanas, immanemque turmam
Fulmine sustulerit caduco,
Qui terram inertem, qui mare temperat
Ventosum ; et urbes, regnaque tristia
Divosque, mortalesque turmas,
Imperio regit UNUS æquo. †

Quid prius dicam solitis parentis
Laudibus ; qui res hominum ac deorum,
Qui mare et terras, variisque mundum
Temperat horis ?

Unde nil majus generatur IPSO :
Nec viget quicquam simile aut secundum :
Proximos ILLI tamen occupavit
Pallas honores. ‡

The most remarkable passage, however, I recol-

* Æneid. III.

† Hor. Od. Lib. iii. Carm. 4.

‡ Hor. Lib. i. Od. 12.

lect in any of the ancient poets for my present purpose, is that in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, where the following lines are put into the mouth of Cato, in reply to Labienus and others who advised him to consult the oracle of Jupiter Ammon in Lybia.

Hæremus cuncti superis, temploque tacente,
 Nil facimus non sponte Dei. Nec vocibus ullis
 Numen eget; dixitque semel nascentibus auctor,
 Quidquid scire licet. Sterilesne elegit arenas,
 Ut caneret paucis, mersitque hoc pulvere verum?
 Estne Dei sedes, nisi terra, et pontus, et aer,
 Et cælum et virtus?—Superos quid quærimus ultra?
 Jupiter est quodcumque vides, quocumque moveris. *

In farther confirmation of this doctrine, concerning the religious opinions of the ancient philosophers, a very ingenious (and to my mind most convincing) argument is deduced by Dr Cudworth from the reasonings of the *Epicurean school*, which, as he observes, were levelled, *not* against the supposition of a plurality of Deities, but against the belief of *one* Supreme God, everywhere present, and everywhere exerting the active energy of a superintending providence.

Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
 Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas?
 Quis pariter cælos omnes convertere? et omnes
 Ignibus ætheriis terras suffire feraces?
 Omnibus inque locis esse omni tempore præsto?

“ In like manner” (continues Dr Cudworth)

“ when Epicurus pursues the same argument further in Cicero, alleging, that, though such a thing were possible, yet it would be, notwithstanding, absolutely inconsistent with the happiness of any being, he still proceeds on the same hypothesis of one sole and single Deity.”—“ As Epicurus here speaks singularly,” (says Cudworth) “ so the trouble of this theocracy could not be thought so very great to a multitude of co-ordinate Deities, when parcelled out among them, but would rather seem to be but a sportful and delightful divertisement to each of them. Wherefore,” (concludes this very learned and profound writer) “ it is manifest that such an idea as we have declared of the unity of God is a thing which the ancient atheists, under the times of paganism, were not unacquainted with, but principally directed their force against it.” *

I must not leave this fundamental article of Natural Religion, (the existence of the Deity,) without taking notice of the support it derives from the universal consent of all ages and nations. However contaminated with error, however debased by the follies of superstition and credulity, the belief of the existence of supernatural and invisible beings presiding over human affairs will be found to be inseparable from the human mind ; and, in so far as this belief obtains, atheism is excluded. “ *Ex tot generibus*” (says Cicero) “ *nullum est animal, præter hominem, quod habeat notitiam aliquam*

* Intellect. System, pp. 207, 208.

“ Dei : ipsisque in hominibus nulla gens est neque
 “ tam inmansueta, neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi
 “ ignoret, qualem habere Deum deceat, tamen ha-
 “ bendum sciat.” * Now unquestionably the uni-
 versal concurrence of mankind in the belief of any
 proposition is a strong presumption, or rather a
 positive evidence, that this belief has a foundation
 in the principles of our nature ; and if we find
 these natural suggestions of the mind confirmed by
 the authority of the most enlightened philosophers,
 and above all confirmed by the conclusions of our
 own reason, we have all the evidence that possibly
 can be brought in support of any truth whatever.
 Indeed I apprehend there is no truth in the whole
 circle of human knowledge which so many differ-
 ent kinds of proof conspire to establish, as that
 which has been now under our consideration :—
 “ Testimonium populorum atque gentium ” (says
 Lactantius) “ in una hac re non dissidentium : ”—and
 in this manner reasoned the best philosophers of
 old. “ What seems true to *most* wise men ” (as
 Aristotle has excellently observed) “ is very pro-
 “ bable ; what most men, both wise and unwise, as-
 “ sent to, doth still more resemble truth ; but what
 “ men generally consent in hath the highest pro-
 “ bability, and approaches near to demonstration,
 “ so near that it may pass for ridiculous arrogance,
 “ or for intolerable obstinacy and perverseness to de-
 “ ny it.”—“ A man ” (he adds) “ may assume what

* Lib. i. De Legibus, viii.

“ seems true to the wise, if it do not contradict the
 “ common opinion of mankind.” *

The following passages are extracted from different writers of antiquity. They all express the same idea, the presumption for the existence of the Deity arising from universal consent. But on a subject of so interesting a nature it is pleasing to place the same truth in various lights, as well as to remark a coincidence of sentiment among those enlarged and cultivated minds which have devoted their talents to the improvement and happiness of the human race.

“ Multum dare solemus” (says Seneca) “ præsumptioni omnium hominum, apud nos veritatis
 “ argumentum est aliquid omnibus videri ; tanquam Deos sic esse colligimus, quod omnibus de
 “ Diis opinio insista est ; nec ulla gens usquam est
 “ adeo extra leges moresque projecta, ut non aliquos Deos credat.” †

To the same purpose Cicero : “ Firmissimum
 “ hoc afferri videtur, cur Deos esse credamus, quod
 “ nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam sit immanis, cujus mentem non imbuerit Deorum opinio. Multi de diis prava sentiunt, id enim vitioso more effici solet, omnes tamen esse vim, et naturam Divinam arbitrantur. Una autem in re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est.” ‡

In the following passage of Maximus Tyrius,

* Arist. Top. 1, 8.

† Sen. Ep. 117.

‡ Tusc. 1. xiii.

the fact on which the argument proceeds is stated with great simplicity and force.

“ In such a contest and tumult and disagreement, (*about other matters of opinion*,) you may see this one law and speech acknowledged by common accord, that there is one God, the King and Father of All, and many Gods, the children of God and ruling together with him. This the Greek says, and this the barbarian says; and the inhabitant of the continent, and the islander, and the wise and the unwise.” *

“ If you search the world,” (says Plutarch,) “ you may find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without money; but no one ever saw a city without a Deity, without a temple, or without some form of worship.”

In the passages now quoted their several authors take for granted that the general consent of mankind in admitting any proposition affords a strong presumption that the proposition is true. And that this is a just principle of reasoning appears (among various other considerations) from this, that “ truth is *one* thing, while errors are numberless, and every man has a different one.” I select this consideration in preference to the others, because the remark is made by Mr Hume himself, the most sceptical of all writers. When we find, therefore, a number of unconnected individuals, all led to the same conclusion by different processes of reasoning, the presumption that the conclusion is true is strengthened in a pro-

portion indefinitely great ; and in like manner, when among an infinite variety of discordant systems that have arisen in different ages and countries, we find some opinions common to them all, we are inevitably led to consider these opinions as possessing the highest evidence by which any truth can possibly be supported. We may add to this observation, that when among an infinite variety of rites and ceremonies we trace universally the operation of certain common affections and emotions, we have a demonstration that these affections and emotions form a constituent part of the nature of man.

I am aware of an objection that may be stated to this doctrine, that there are some articles of belief universally received by mankind in ages of ignorance, which come to be as generally regarded as mere prejudices in the progress of human reason. Such, for example, is the belief that the earth is at rest, and the sun in motion ;* and in general all those prejudices called by Lord Bacon *Idola Tribus*. It may be supposed, therefore, that, for anything we know to the contrary, the case may one day be the same with our belief of the existence of a Deity.

In answer to this objection I would observe, that wherever a prejudice is found to obtain universally among mankind in any stage of society, this prejudice must have some foundation in the general principles of our nature, and must proceed upon some *truth* or *fact* inaccurately apprehended, or er-

* See Trembley sur les Prejuges, p. 21.

roneously judged of. The suspense of judgment, therefore, which is proper with respect to particular opinions till they are once examined, can never justify scepticism with respect to the general principles or laws of the human mind. Our belief of the sun's motion is not a conclusion to which we are fairly led by any such principle or law, but an inference rashly drawn from the perceptions of sense, which do not warrant such an inference. All that we see is, that there is a relative change of place between us and the sun; and this fact, which is made known to us by our senses, no subsequent discovery of philosophy pretends to disprove. It is not therefore the evidence of external perception which is overturned by the Copernican system, but *a judgment* or inference of the understanding, of the rashness of which every person must be fully sensible the moment he is made to reflect with due attention on the circumstances of the case. In other words, the Copernican system not only informs us of the real constitution of the universe, but satisfies us with respect to the *grounds* of this universal prejudice; and the doctrine which it substitutes for our first crude conclusions on the subject is founded, not on any process of reasoning *a priori*, but on the demonstrable inconsistency of these conclusions with the various phenomena which our perceptions present to us. Had Copernicus, like some of the sophists of old, not only asserted the stability of the earth, but that no such thing as *motion* exists in the universe, his theory would have

been perfectly analogous to that of Berkeley, and no answer to it could have been devised more pertinent and philosophical than that which Plato is said to have given to the same paradox in the mouth of Zeno, by rising up and walking before his eyes. We are entitled, therefore, to dispute the similarity of the cases, till some prejudice is pointed out as universal as the belief of the existence of a Deity, from which prejudice such a belief could have arisen.

Another objection to the argument for the existence of a Deity drawn from universal consent is founded on absurd tenets and extravagant ceremonies sanctioned by the religious creeds of all ages and nations. “Examine” (says Mr Hume) “the
“religious principles which have prevailed in the
“world, you will scarcely be persuaded that they
“are anything but sick men’s dreams ; or perhaps
“will regard them more as the playsome whimsies
“of monkeys in man’s shape, than the serious, positive, dogmatical asseverations of a being who
“dignifies himself with the title of rational.”—“To
“oppose the torrent of scholastic religion by such
“feeble maxims as these ; that it is impossible for
“the same thing to be and not to be ; that the whole
“is greater than a part ; that two and three make
“five ; is pretending to stop the ocean with a bulrush.” And hence this ingenious writer finds himself obliged to conclude, that “the whole is a
“riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery, and
“that doubt, uncertainty, and suspense appear the

“ only result of our most accurate scrutiny on this
“ subject.”

In a former work I attempted to reply to Mr Hume's reasonings on this head, and even endeavoured to deduce from the circumstances on which he founds his objections a new argument for the being of a Deity ; inasmuch as the absurd tenets and extravagant ceremonies which men are taught to reverence when they are connected with their religious belief, prove how irresistible the evidence must be of that fundamental principle, by means of which they lay hold of the understanding and the heart. * And it was in this manner, I apprehend, that Lord Bacon felt, when he said that He “ had rather believe all “ the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and “ the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind.” Or, in other words, that there was no proposition, how absurd soever, to which he could not more easily *give* his assent, than he could *withhold* it from this truth, proclaimed to him at once by every part of the universe.

To one who considers the subject in this light, the history even of the errors and follies of superstition becomes interesting and instructive, and instead of justifying the suggestions of scepticism, throws a new lustre on the evidences of religion ; and, while it teaches him to regard not only with indulgence, but with reverence, whatever tenets and observances are sanctified to other men by all the best feelings

* Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. I. pp. 366, 367, 368, 369 Sixth Edit.

of the heart, it cherishes in his own mind that pure and undefiled religion which worships God in spirit and in truth.

SECTION III.

PART II.

I formerly mentioned some circumstances which may help to explain why the idea of a God, although it forces itself irresistibly on every serious and reflecting mind, is so seldom presented to our thoughts when we are engaged in the necessary business of human life. This idea, I observed, is the result of two principles of our nature,—the one of which is, that every thing which begins to exist must have a cause ;—the other, that a combination of means conspiring to a particular end implies intelligence. Now the former of these principles, although it plainly intimates to us (on an accurate analysis of the conceptions it suggests) the constant operation of *mind* in producing the phenomena of the universe, yet it does not call our attention to this efficiency of mind when we are employed about our ordinary occupations. On the contrary, the attention is diverted from such apprehensions by a very remarkable bias of our nature, which leads us to associate power and efficiency with material objects and physical events ; and to consider the phenomena of the universe as a chain of causes and

effects, the links of which are necessarily connected with each other.* Another important purpose is answered by this bias of the mind, as it serves to animate our curiosity in the investigation of physical causes, particularly in the earlier part of our existence. The curiosity which children discover is, I think, *chiefly* a confused desire to know the efficient causes of the phenomena they see; and although their curiosity in this respect is never gratified, yet it serves to increase their stock of useful knowledge, by directing their attention to *physical* causes, and to the general laws of nature.

In order to prevent still farther that inconvenient distraction of our thoughts which would necessarily result from the constant apprehension of the agency of mind, the changes in the state of the universe are in general accomplished by slow and imperceptible degrees. If an animal or a vegetable were brought into existence before our eyes in an instant of time, the event would not in itself be more wonderful than their gradual growth from an embryo or seed to maturity. But, on the former supposition, there is no man who would not perceive and acknowledge the immediate agency of an intelligent cause; whereas, according to the actual order of things, the effect steals so slowly on our observation that it excites little or no curiosity, excepting in those who are possessed of a sufficient degree of reflection to contrast the present

* See upon this subject *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol I. Chap. I. § 2.

state of the objects they see with the first origin and progressive stages of their existence.

With respect to the other principle, which leads us to apprehend *intelligence* and *design* whenever we see a combination of means conspiring to a particular end, the effects of familiarity formerly remarked produce such habits of inattention in the greater part of mankind as prevent it from making any sensible impression on their minds on the ordinary occasions of human life. Were it not for these effects of familiarity the business of the world would appear unworthy of our regard, and we should be every moment in the same state of astonishment and of awe, as if (according to the supposition of Aristotle and of Cicero, already mentioned,) we were suddenly introduced to a view of the magnificent spectacle of the earth and the heavens after having passed the earlier part of our lives in a cavern under ground.

In general, it would appear to have been the intention of the Deity to make known his existence and attributes to every mind that makes a proper use of its faculties, without obtruding these sublime conceptions on the thoughtless and inconsiderate, or withdrawing the attention even of the serious from the necessary pursuits of business. The consequence is, that the Deity is never an immediate object of human perception, but is recognized by the deliberate exercise of our reason in the incessant workings of his wisdom and power, as our feeble sight, unable to gaze directly at the splen-

dour of the sun, enjoys the milder influence of his rays when reflected from the verdure of the woods or the flowers of the field.

Beside these circumstances in the constitution of the human mind which conceal the Deity from the view of those whose thoughts are wholly engrossed by sensible objects, and by the pursuits of this world, there are some particular habits of life that are in a peculiar degree unfavourable to religious impressions ; above all, those artificial habits to which we are accustomed in large and populous cities, where we are surrounded wholly with the effects of human skill and human industry. These lay hold of the curiosity in our early years, and divert it from the beautiful and sublime spectacle of the universe. Of such modes of thinking and feeling *atheism*, (or what amounts nearly to the same thing,) a total insensibility to all religious and moral impressions, is the genuine offspring ; and in proportion as the manners of a people recede from the simplicity of natural occupations and pursuits, and acquire the superinduced habits either of commercial drudgery or of fashionable life, this miserable perversion of the understanding and the heart may be expected to prevail.* The scepticism which

* There is I think some ingenuity as well as wit in the following note, by an Italian translator of Horace, on the Epicurean principles sported by the city mouse, in his conversation with his country friend.

———Quid te juvat, inquit, amice,
Prærupti nemoris patientem vivere dorso ?

has long vitiated the philosophy, and injured the morals of a neighbouring country, may be traced in some degree at least from this very cause. The *Abbé de Lille* complains in his preface to the translation of the *Georgics* of the difficulty of the work, from those ideas of meanness and poverty which the French are accustomed to associate with the profession of husbandry ;—and the same thing has been experienced by those who have attempted to translate the *Seasons of Thomson* into that language. How perverted from all the purposes of our being must have been a state of manners, in which those rural scenes and occupations which to our English poets form the most favourite subjects of description, were considered as incompatible with the elegance and dignity of poetical expression ; and where ideas of meanness and wretchedness were associated with the primitive and the only *essential* occupation of man ; that occupation in which alone he associates his exertions with the bounty of Providence, who (as Franklin has beautifully observ-

Vis tu homines urbemque feris præponere silvis ?
 Carpe viam, (mihi crede,) comes : terrestria quando
 Mortales animas vivunt sortita, neque ulla est
 Aut magno aut parvo lethi fuga : quo bone circa,
 Dum licet, in rebus jucundis vive beatus :
 Vive memor, quam sis ævi brevis.

Jucundum quidem est urbanum audire murem Epicuri de animi interitu propugnare sententiam. Ergone tanta erit urbium pravitas, ut mures etiam atheismum urbe profiteantur ?—Horace's *Satires* and *Art of Poetry* translated into Italian verse, with Notes. Milan, 1784.

ed) “blesses the labours of the husbandman by a
“continued miracle wrought in his favour, as a
“reward for his innocent life and virtuous indus-
“try.”

SECTION IV.

Digression with respect to the Use and Abuse of the Speculation concerning Final Causes in Philosophical Inquiries.

The objections against the speculation concerning Final Causes which have been hitherto under our consideration have been urged with the avowed design of invalidating the argument *a posteriori* for the existence of God. Another objection, however, still remains to be examined, which, although it has been frequently insisted on by authors who were far from wishing to favour the cause of atheism, it is of importance for us to obviate as completely as possible, before bringing the present argument to a conclusion, on account of its tendency to weaken that species of evidence on the subject which is most level to the apprehension of ordinary men. The objection I allude to is founded on the supposed incompetency of the human faculties to penetrate the designs of Providence, and on the consequent impiety and presumption of indulging ourselves in conjectures concerning the operations of infinite wisdom. Descartes has insisted much on

this idea, and has carried it so far as to reject altogether such speculations from philosophy. “ Let
 “ us never found any of our reasonings concerning
 “ physical phenomena on *the ends* which we may
 “ imagine God or nature had in view in the consti-
 “ tution of the universe; for this obvious reason,
 “ that we ought not to indulge so great a degree of
 “ arrogance as to suppose ourselves privy to the
 “ divine counsels; but, considering God as the *effi-*
 “ *cient cause* of all things, we shall see whatever
 “ conclusion the light of reason enables us to form
 “ from that knowledge of his attributes which he
 “ has been pleased to enable us to attain.” *—“ And
 “ for this reason alone I am of opinion that the
 “ whole of this speculation concerning *final causes*
 “ is altogether useless, because I do not think that,
 “ without rashness, we can presume to investigate
 “ the designs of God.” † Some observations much
 to the same purpose are to be found in the works
 of Maupertuis and of Buffon.

To this class of observations against final causes, a most satisfactory answer is given by Mr Boyle in an Essay written expressly on the subject. The great merits of this excellent person as an experimental philosopher are universally known; but I do not think that his general philosophical views have attracted so much notice from his successors as they ought to have done. They appear to me to be uncommonly comprehensive and just, and to bear

* Princip. Pars. i. § 28.

† Meditatio Quarta.

marks of a mind no less fitted for metaphysical and moral pursuits than for physical researches. In the work to which I refer at present, we find a pleasing union of philosophical depth with that exalted piety which formed a distinguished feature in the author's character. The world he considered (as he tells us himself) "as the temple of God, and man as born
" the *priest of nature*, ordained (by being qualified)
" to celebrate Divine Service, not only *in* it, but *for*
" it." With these views he could not fail to be irritated at the attempts made by Descartes to explode his favourite speculation concerning final causes ; and the remarks he has made in reply to him contain a complete refutation of all that has been since advanced with a like view by Maupertuis and Buffon. His reasonings on this subject extend to so great a length that it is impossible to quote them here in the author's own language ; and I am unwilling to weaken their force by an imperfect abstract. I must therefore content myself with extracting one of his remarks, from which the principal scope of his essay may be easily collected.

" Suppose that a countryman, being in a clear
" day brought into the garden of some famous ma-
" thematician, should see there one of those curi-
" ous gnomonic instruments that show at once the
" place of the sun in the zodiac, his declination from
" the equator, the day of the month, the length of
" the day, &c. &c. it would indeed be presumption
" in him, being unacquainted both with the mathe-
" matical disciplines, and the several intentions of

“ the artist, to pretend or think himself able to dis-
“ cover *all the ends* for which so curious and elabo-
“ rate a piece was framed ; but when he sees it
“ furnished with a style, with horary lines and
“ numbers, and manifestly perceives the shadow to
“ mark from time to time the hour of the day, it
“ would be no more a presumption than an error in
“ him to conclude, that (whatever other uses the
“ instrument was fit or was designed for) it is a
“ sun-dial, that was meant to show the hour of the
“ day.”*

The essay of Mr Boyle now referred to appears to me to be sufficient to vindicate the investigation of final causes so far as it is subservient to the proof of a Deity. At the same time, I am ready to acknowledge that it is a speculation extremely liable to be abused, and which should always be conducted with modesty and diffidence. I acknowledge also that it has sometimes been introduced into natural philosophy in a manner which has led physical inquirers astray from the proper objects of their science. The Peripatetics, in particular, have been justly accused of blending final and physical causes together, and substituting conjectures concerning the ends which nature had in view for an explanation of her operations. I make this observation at present, as it furnishes me with an op-

* In the same Essay Mr Boyle has offered some very acute and judicious strictures on the abuses to which this research is liable, when incautiously and presumptuously pursued.

portunity of vindicating Lord Bacon from the charge of a tendency to atheism which was first brought against him by Cudworth, and has been repeated by some modern sceptics who wished to justify their own aversion to the speculation about final causes by Bacon's authority.

The passage to which Cudworth objects is as follows: "Incredibile est quantum agmen idolorum philosophiæ immiserit, naturalium operationum ad similitudinem actionum humanarum reductio." * "If" (says Cudworth) "the advancer of learning here speaks of those who unskilfully attribute their own properties to inanimate bodies, (as when they say that matter desires forms as the female does the male, and that heavy bodies descend down by appetite towards the centre that they may rest therein,) there is nothing to be reprehended in the passage. But if his meaning be extended further to take away all final causes from the things of nature, then it is the very spirit of atheism and infidelity. It is no idol of the cave or den, (to use that affected language,) that is, no prejudice or fallacy imposed on ourselves from the attributing our own animalish properties to things without us, to think that the frame and system of this whole world was contrived by a perfect understanding and mind." †

* "It is incredible what a host of prejudices have been introduced into philosophy by a disposition to liken natural operations to the actions of men."

† Page 680, 1st Edit.

In this passage the very learned author seems to have lost sight of his usual candour ; and indeed I think it impossible that such expressions could have escaped him, if he had had the patience to peruse the whole of Bacon's writings, for there is no author, ancient or modern, who lies less open to any charge of scepticism. " I had rather believe" (says he in one of his essays) " all the fables in the " Legend, and the Talmud and the Alcoran, than " that this universal frame is without a mind. It is " true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind " to atheism ; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's " minds about to religion ; for while the mind of " man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may " sometimes rest in them and go no farther ; but " when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate " and linked together, it must needs fly to Provi- " dence and to Deity. Nay, even that school " which is most accused of atheism doth most de- " monstrate religion, that is, the school of Leucip- " pus, and Democritus, and Epicurus. For it is a " thousand times more credible that four mutable " elements, and one immutable fifth essence, duly " and eternally placed, need no God, than that an " army of infinite small portions, or seeds unplaced, " should have produced this order and beauty with- " out a Divine Marshal."

The real state of Bacon's opinion about final causes was plainly this, That the consideration of them was not properly a part of natural philosophy, but of metaphysics, or of natural theology ;

and that it was safer (at least for our physical inquiries) that they should be kept as distinct as possible from all other sciences ; a caution which, although not so necessary in the present age, was highly useful in his time, in consequence of the absurd mixture of physical and final causes which occur in the writings of the Peripatetics, who then possessed an almost unlimited influence over the opinions of the learned. That he did not mean to censure the speculation about final causes when confined to its proper place, and applied to its proper purpose, appears from the following passage :—

“ The second part of *metaphysics* is the investigation of *final causes*, which I object to, *not* as a speculation which ought to be omitted, but as one which is generally introduced out of its proper place, by being connected with *physical* researches. If this were merely a fault of arrangement, I should not be disposed to lay great stress upon it ; for arrangement is useful chiefly as a help to illustrate, and does not form an essential object in science. But in this instance a disregard to *method* has occasioned the most fatal consequences to philosophy, inasmuch as the consideration of *final causes* in physics has supplanted and banished the study of *physical causes*, the fancy amusing itself with unsubstantial explanations derived from the former, and diverting the curiosity from a steady prosecution of the latter.”

After illustrating this remark by various examples, Lord Bacon adds,—“ I would not, however, be un-

“ derstood by these observations to insinuate, that
“ the final causes just mentioned may not be found-
“ ed on truth, and in a *metaphysical* view extreme-
“ ly worthy of attention ; but only, that when such
“ disquisitions invade and overrun the appropriate
“ province of *physics*, they are likely to lay waste
“ and ruin that department of philosophy.” The
whole passage concludes with these words. “ And
“ so much concerning *metaphysics* ; the part of
“ which relating to *final causes* I do not deny may
“ be met with as a subject of discussion, both in
“ physical and in metaphysical treatises. But
“ while in the latter of these it is introduced with
“ propriety, in the former it is altogether mis-
“ placed ; and *that* not merely because it violates
“ the rules of a just order, but because it operates
“ as a powerful obstacle to the progress of induc-
“ tive science.”

This passage, while it refutes in the most satisfactory manner the charge brought against Bacon by Cudworth, contains some very just remarks on the improper application made by the Peripatetics and their followers, of the speculation concerning final causes,—an abuse which they carried so far as to justify Bacon, in a work expressly destined to illustrate the true method of inquiry in physics, to propose the complete rejection of that speculation from natural philosophy.

In the present age, when the true method of philosophizing is pretty generally understood, and when philosophers seem more in danger of going

wrong in natural theology than in natural philosophy, it does not appear to me to be so necessary as formerly to banish final causes from physics, provided always they are kept distinct from physical causes, with which they are scarcely in any danger (in the present state of science) of being confounded. What harm can possibly result from the natural philosopher's remarking those instances of design which fall under his review in the course of his inquiries? Or if it should be considered as foreign to *his* province to speak of *design*, he may at least be permitted to remark what *ends* are really accomplished by particular means, and what advantages are derived by man from the general laws by which the phenomena of nature are regulated. In doing this, he only states a *fact*; and if it be improper for him to go farther, he may leave the inference to the moralist or to the divine.

In consequence, however, of the vague and common-place declamation against the use of final causes in physics, countenanced by those detached expressions of Bacon, which have suggested the foregoing reflections, it has become fashionable among philosophers to omit the consideration of them entirely, as a speculation inconsistent with the genuine spirit of inductive science; a caution (it may be remarked by the way) which is the most scrupulously observed by those writers who are the most forward to remark every apparent *anomaly* or *disorder* in the economy of the universe. The effect of this has been to divest the study of nature of

its most attractive charms, and to sacrifice to a false idea of logical rigour all the moral impressions and pleasures which it is fitted to yield ; and even, when the most striking accommodation of means to an end force themselves upon the mind, to take no notice of such facts in their physical speculations. Nay, what is worse, those writers who are the most forward to remark every apparent irregularity in the universe never fail to remind us (if at any time we seem to be struck with appearances of order and of wisdom) that the consideration of *final causes* is altogether exploded by that inductive philosophy which Bacon recommended, and to which we are indebted for the sublime discoveries of Newton and his followers. Indeed, this scholastic phrase has become so obnoxious, that it were to be wished it could be laid aside, and some simpler mode of speaking, such as *ends* or *uses*, substituted instead of it. In the meantime, it may contribute to smooth the way for such a change in phraseology to employ indiscriminately these different terms as synonymous and convertible expressions.

To this we may add, that there are some parts of nature which we cannot be said to understand as philosophers, without the consideration of *uses*. This is remarkably the case in the study of anatomy. To know the structure of the body of an animal we must not only examine the conformation of the parts, but we must consider their *functions*, and in what way they conspire to the pre-

servation and health of the animal.* I am inclined to think that it is by means of the consideration of *uses* that the principal anatomical discoveries have been made. Every anatomist in his inquiries proceeds upon the maxim, that nothing in the body of an animal was made in vain; and when he meets with something, the use of which is not obvious, he feels himself dissatisfied till he discovers some at least of the purposes to which it is subservient. We have one remarkable instance of this recorded by Mr Boyle.

“ I remember that when I asked our famous
 “ Harvey, in the only discourse I had with him,
 “ (which was but a little while before he died,)
 “ what were the things which induced him to think
 “ of a circulation of the blood? He answered me,
 “ that when he took notice that the valves in the
 “ veins of so many parts of the body were so placed,
 “ that they gave free passage to the blood towards
 “ the heart, but opposed the passage of the venal
 “ blood the contrary way, he was invited to think
 “ that so provident a cause as nature had not placed
 “ so many valves without design, and no design
 “ seemed more probable than that since the blood
 “ could not well, because of the interposing valves,
 “ be sent by the veins to the limbs, it should be
 “ sent through the arteries, and return through the

* Consult on this subject a paper by Dr John Wallis, and another by Dr Tyson in the Philosophical Transactions, No. 269. For a short account of them see Philosophical Transactions, (from 1700 to 1720,) abridged, Vol. V. p. 1, *et seq.*

“veins, whose valves did not oppose its course that way.” *

In general it may be observed, that those philosophers who have been most successful in detecting the secrets of nature have been men strongly impressed with the general idea of prevailing order and of benevolent design; and I have no doubt that this impression contributed greatly to enlighten their views and to guide their investigations. It is remarked by Dr Priestley, (a writer whose opinion on *this* question is of great value, from the signal success of his own experimental inquiries,) “that, as true philosophy tends to promote piety, so a generous and manly piety is reciprocally subservient to the purposes of philosophy; for while we keep in view the great FINAL Cause of all the parts and the laws of nature, we have a clue by which to trace the efficient cause.” To the same purpose Priestley quotes the following remark of Hartley in his *Observations on Man*. “Since this world is a system of benevolence, and consequently its Author the object of unbounded love and adoration, benevolence and piety are our only true guides in our inquiries into it, the only keys which will unlock the mysteries of nature, and clues which lead through her labyrinths.

* Boyle's Works, Vol. IV. folio, p. 539. For some remarks on this anecdote by the late celebrated anatomist, Dr William Hunter, see *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. pp. 487, 488. Third Edition.

“ Of this all branches of natural philosophy and
“ natural history afford abundant instances. In
“ all these inquiries let the inquirer take it for
“ granted previously that every thing is right, and
“ the best that can be *cæteris manentibus* ; that is,
“ let him with a pious confidence seek for benevo-
“ lent purposes, and he will be always directed to
“ the right road, and after a due continuance in it
“ attain to some new and valuable truth : Where-
“ as every other principle of examination being
“ foreign to the great plan on which the universe is
“ constructed, must lead into endless mazes, errors,
“ and perplexities.” *

Having said so much about the research of final causes in physics, I shall subjoin a few reflections on its application to the Philosophy of the Human Mind ; a science in which the just rules of investigation are as yet far from being completely understood. Of this no stronger proof can be produced than the confusion between final and efficient causes which still prevails in the writings of our most eminent moralists. The same confusion, as I have already observed, may be traced in the *physical* theories of the schoolmen ; but since the time of Bacon it has been so completely corrected, that, in the wildest hypotheses of the eighteenth century, hardly a vestige of it is to be found.

To the logical error just mentioned it is owing that so many false accounts have been given of the

* Preface to Priestley's History of Electricity.

principles of human conduct, or of the motives from which our actions proceed. When the general laws of our constitution are attentively examined they will be found to have for their object the happiness and improvement both of the individual and of society. This is their *final* cause, or the end for which we may presume they were destined by our Maker. But in such cases it seldom happens, that, while man is obeying the active impulses of his nature, he has any idea of the ultimate ends he is promoting, or is able to calculate the remote effects of those little wheels which he puts into motion. These active impulses may therefore in one sense be considered as the *efficient* causes of his conduct; inasmuch as they are the means employed to determine him to a particular course of action, and as they operate, at least in the first instance, without any reflection on *his* part on the ends to which they are subservient. Philosophers, however, have in every age been extremely apt, when they had discovered the salutary tendency of any principle of action, to conclude that the principle derived its origin from a sense of this tendency. Hence have arisen the theories which attempt to account for all our actions from self-love, and also those which would resolve the whole of morality into views of utility.

I do not know of any author who has been more completely aware of this common error than Mr Smith, who, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, always treats separately of the *final* causes of the

different principles he considers, and of the *mechanism* (as he calls it,) by which nature accomplishes the effect. The following profound remarks show sufficiently the opinion he had of the great importance of attending to the distinction between them.

“ In every part of the universe we observe means
“ adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which
“ they are intended to produce, and in the mecha-
“ nism of a plant or animal body admire how every-
“ thing is contrived for advancing the two great
“ purposes of nature, the support of the individual,
“ and the propagation of the species. But in these,
“ and in all such objects, we still distinguish the
“ efficient from the final cause of their several mo-
“ tions and organizations. The digestion of the
“ food, the circulation of the blood, and the secre-
“ tion of the several juices which are drawn from
“ it, are operations all of them necessary for the
“ great purposes of animal life, yet we never endea-
“ vour to account for them from those purposes, as
“ from their efficient causes ; nor imagine that the
“ blood circulates, or that the food digests of its
“ own accord, with a view or intention to the pur-
“ poses of circulation or digestion. The wheels of
“ the watch are all admirably adapted to the end
“ for which it was made, the pointing of the hour.
“ All their various motions conspire in the nicest
“ manner to produce this effect. If they were en-
“ dowed with a desire and intention to produce it,
“ they could not do better. Yet we never ascribe
“ any such intention or desire to them, but to the

“ watchmaker ; and we know that they are put into
“ motion by a spring, which intends the effect it
“ produces as little as they do. But though, in
“ accounting for the operations of bodies, we never
“ fail to distinguish in this manner the efficient
“ from the final cause, in accounting for those of
“ the mind we are apt to confound these two dif-
“ ferent things with one another. When by natu-
“ ral principles we are led to advance those ends
“ which a refined and enlightened reason would re-
“ commend to us, we are very apt to impute to that
“ reason, as to their efficient cause, the sentiments
“ and actions by which we advance those ends, and
“ to imagine that to be the wisdom of man which
“ in reality is the wisdom of God. Upon a super-
“ ficial view this cause seems sufficient, and the
“ system of human nature seems to be more simple
“ and agreeable when all its different operations
“ are in this manner deduced from a single prin-
“ ciple.” *

These observations point out very plainly the errors to which we are exposed in moral inquiries by our disposition to confound together efficient and final causes. But it does not therefore follow, that even in such inquiries the consideration of final causes is to be rejected. On the contrary, this very author (as I already hinted) has frequently indulged himself in speculations concerning them, and seems plainly to have considered them as important objects of philosophical research, no less

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. I. p. 218.

than *efficient*, (or, as I would rather call them, *physical*) causes. The only caution to be observed is, that the one may not be confounded with the other.

Between these two different researches, however, there is a very intimate connection. In many cases the consideration of final causes has led to the discovery of some general law of nature, (as in the instance of the circulation of the blood already mentioned,) and in almost every case the discovery of a general law points out to us clearly some wise and beneficent purposes to which it is subservient. And it is the prospect of such applications that chiefly renders the investigation of general laws interesting to the mind.

Among the philosophers of antiquity no one seems to have entertained juster notions on this subject than Socrates! “ After many other fruitless
“ attempts he had made in his youth to see into the
“ causes of things, happening to hear that Anaxago-
“ ras taught that all things were governed by a su-
“ preme mind, and being mightily pleased with this
“ principle, he had recourse to his writings, full of
“ expectation to see the whole scheme of nature ex-
“ plained from the perfect wisdom of an all-govern-
“ ing mind, and to have all his doubts about the per-
“ fection of the universe satisfied. But he was much
“ disappointed when he found that Anaxagoras
“ made no use of this sovereign mind in his explica-
“ tions of nature, and referred nothing to the order
“ and perfection of the universe as its reason, but
“ introduced certain aërial, etherial, and aqueous

“ powers, and such incredible principles for the
“ causes of things. Upon the whole, Socrates found
“ that this account of nature was no more satisfactory
“ than if one who undertook to account for the ac-
“ tions of Socrates should begin with telling us that
“ Socrates was actuated by a principle of thought
“ and design; and pretending to explain how he came
“ to be sitting in prison at that time when he was
“ condemned to die by the unjust and ungrateful
“ Athenians, he should acquaint us that the body of
“ Socrates consisted of bones and muscles; that the
“ bones were solid and had their articulations, while
“ the muscles were capable of being contracted and
“ extended, by which he was enabled to move his
“ body and put himself in a sitting posture; and
“ after adding an explanation of the nature of sound,
“ and of the organs of the voice, he should boast
“ at length that he had thus accounted for Socrates’s
“ sitting and conversing with his friends in prison,
“ without taking notice of the decree of the Athe-
“ nians, and that he himself thought it was more
“ just and becoming to wait patiently for the execu-
“ tion of their sentence, than escape to Megara or
“ Thebes, there to live in exile. ’Tis true,” says
he, “ that without bones and nerves I should not
“ be able to perform any action in life; but it would
“ be an unaccountable way of speaking to assign
“ those for the reasons of my actions, while my
“ mind is influenced by the appearance of what is
“ best.” *

* See Maclaurin’s View of Newton’s Philosophy.—The

The authority of Socrates, however, cannot be expected to have much weight with natural philosophers in the present age of the world. That of Sir Isaac Newton will not be disputed on a question relating to the spirit of that inductive philosophy, of which his writings afford the most perfect and most successful exemplification hitherto given to the world. This great man (as we are told by his intimate friend Mr Maclaurin) used sometimes to observe, “ that it gave him particular pleasure “ to see how much his philosophy had contributed “ to promote an attention to final causes, after Des- “ cartes and others had attempted to banish them.” Mr Maclaurin, too, (whose acquaintance with the just rules of philosophizing will not be denied) has remarked, “ that of all sorts of causes final causes “ are the most clearly placed in our view ; and that “ it is difficult to comprehend why it should be “ thought arrogant in us to attend to the design “ and contrivance that is so evidently displayed in “ nature, and obvious to all men ; to maintain, for “ instance, that the eye was made for seeing, though “ we may not be able either to account mechanical- “ ly for the refraction of light in the coats of the “ eye, or to explain how the image is propagated “ from the retina to the mind.”

It was before observed, with respect to anatomists, that all of them, without exception, whether professedly, friendly, or hostile, to the inqui-

above is a short abridgement of the reasonings of Socrates in the *Phædon* of Plato.

sition of final causes, concur in availing themselves of its guidance in their physiological researches. A similar remark will be found to apply to other classes of scientific inquirers. Whatever their speculative opinions may be, the moment their curiosity is fairly engaged in the pursuit of truth, either physical or moral, they involuntarily, and often perhaps unconsciously, submit their understandings to a logic borrowed neither from the schools of Aristotle nor of Bacon. The ethical system of those ancient philosophers who held that *virtue consists in following nature*, not only involves a recognition of the doctrine of final causes, but represents the study of them in as far as regards the ends and destination of our own being as the great business and duty of life; *Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur*. The system, too, of those physicians who profess to follow nature in the treatment of diseases, by watching and aiding her *medicative powers*, assumes the truth of the same doctrine as its fundamental principle. A still more remarkable illustration, however, of the influence which this species of evidence has over the mind, even when we are the least aware of its connection with metaphysical conclusions, occurs in the speculations of the French economists. The very title of *physiocratie*, by which some of them distinguished their system, affords a sufficient proof of their own ideas concerning its characteristical spirit and tendency; and the same thing is more fully demonstrated by their frequent recurrence to the physical and moral laws of nature as the uner-

ring standard which the legislator should keep in view in all his positive institutions. “Ces lois” (says Quesnai) “forment ensemble ce qu’on appelle *la loi naturelle*. Tous les hommes et toutes les puissances humaines doivent être soumis à ces lois souveraines, instituées par l’Etre Suprême : Elles sont immuables et irrefragables, et les meilleures lois possibles ; et par conséquent la base du gouvernement le plus parfait, et la règle fondamentale de toutes les lois positives ; car les lois positives ne sont que des lois de manutention relatives à l’ordre naturel évidemment le plus avantageux au genre humain.” I do not speak at present of the *justness* of those opinions ; I wish only to remark, that, in the statement of them given by their original authors, it is assumed as a truth self-evident and indisputable, not merely that benevolent design is manifested in all the physical and moral arrangements connected with this globe, but that the study of these arrangements is indispensably necessary to lay a solid foundation for political science.

The same principles appear to have led Mr Smith into that train of thinking which gave birth to his inquiries concerning National Wealth. “Man” (he observes in one of his oldest manuscripts now extant) “is generally considered by statesmen and projectors as the materials of a sort of political mechanics. Projectors disturb nature in the course of her operations in human affairs ; and it requires no more than to let her alone, and give her fair play in the pursuit of her own designs.” And in another passage : “Little else is requisite

“ to carry a state to the highest degree of opulence
“ from the lowest barbarism but peace, easy taxes,
“ and a tolerable administration of justice ; all the
“ rest being brought about by the natural course
“ of things. All governments which thwart this
“ natural course, which force things into another
“ channel, or which endeavour to arrest the pro-
“ gress of society at a particular point, are unna-
“ tural, and to support themselves are obliged to
“ be oppressive and tyrannical.” Various other
passages of a similar import might be quoted both
from his *Wealth of Nations* and from his *Theory*
of Moral Sentiments.

This doctrine of Mr Smith's and of Quesnay's, which tends to simplify the theory of legislation by exploding the policy of those complicated checks and restraints which swell the municipal codes of most nations, has now, I believe, become the prevailing creed of thinking men all over Europe ; and, as commonly happens with prevailing creeds, has been pushed by many of its partizans far beyond the views and intentions of its original authors. Such, too, is the influence of fashion on the one hand, and of obnoxious phrases on the other, that it has found some of its most zealous abettors and propagators among writers who would reject, without a moment's hesitation, as superstitious and puerile, every reference to *final causes* in a philosophical discussion. *

* See *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. Chap. iv. sect. 6.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES
OF NATURAL RELIGION.

CHAPTER THIRD.

OF THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY.

THE observations made in the last article contain some of the principal heads of the argument for the existence of God, and also for his unity, for his power, and for his wisdom. Of the two last of these attributes, we justly say that they are *infinite*; that is, that our conceptions of them always rise in proportion as our faculties are cultivated, and as our knowledge of the universe becomes more extensive. The writers on natural religion commonly give a particular enumeration of attributes, which they divide into the natural, the intellectual, and the moral; and of which they treat at length in a systematical manner. This view of the subject, whatever may be its advantages, could not be adopted with propriety here. The remarks which follow are confined to the evidences of the Divine goodness and justice; those attributes which con-

stitute the moral perfections of the Deity, and which render him the proper object of religious worship.

In applying to the Deity the phrase *moral attributes*, I express myself in conformity to common language; but the object of the following speculations will be better understood when I say, that the scope of my reasonings is to show, in the first place, that there are evidences of *benevolent design* in the universe; and secondly, that there are evidences of a moral government exercised over man by means of *rewards and punishments*; or, in other words, that the constitution of the human mind, and the course of human affairs, prove that the reward of virtue, and the punishment of vice, is the aim of the general laws by which the world is governed.

SECTION I.

Of the Evidences of Benevolent Design in the Universe.

In entering on this subject we may lay it down as a fundamental principle, that our ideas of the moral attributes of God must be derived from our own moral perceptions. It is only by attending to these that we can form a conception of what his attributes are; and it is in this way we are furnished with the strongest proofs that they really belong to him.

In the course of our inquiries into the principles

of morals, it formerly appeared that the power of distinguishing *right* from *wrong* is one of the most remarkable circumstances which raise man above the brutes ; and indeed, I apprehend, it is chiefly *this* modification of *reason* we have in view, when we employ that word to express the exclusive characteristic of the human race among the various inhabitants of the globe. I endeavoured farther to show, that to *act* in conformity to this sense of rectitude is the highest excellence which man is capable of attaining ; insomuch, that, in comparison of *moral* worth, the most splendid intellectual endowments appear insignificant and contemptible. Nor do these ideas apply only to our own species. I before showed that the constitution of our nature determines us to conceive the distinction between right and wrong as eternal and immutable ; not as arising from an arbitrary accommodation of our frame to the qualities of external objects, like the distinction between agreeable and disagreeable tastes or smells, but as a distinction necessary and essential, and independent of the will of any being whatever,—analogous in this respect to that between mathematical truth and falsehood. We are justified, therefore, in drawing inferences from our own moral judgments with respect to the moral administration of the Deity, on the same ground on which we conclude that what appears to us to be demonstrably true must appear in the same light to all other intelligent beings. And as moral worth is the highest excellence competent to our

own nature, we are justified in ranking moral excellence among those attributes of God which more peculiarly claim our love and adoration.*

But not to insist on this metaphysical view of the subject, it is evident, that, if we believe that we have derived our existence from the Deity, we must ascribe to him, in an infinite degree, all those powers and perfections which he has communicated to us, or which he has rendered us capable of acquiring. From our own imperfect *knowledge* we must ascribe to him *omniscience* ; from our limited *power* we must ascribe to him *omnipotence* ; and, *a fortiori*, from our moral perceptions we must ascribe to him unerring moral rectitude, and goodness unbounded towards his whole creation.

In opposition to this mode of reasoning, sceptics have frequently urged the impropriety of forming a deity after our own image ; and have represented the argument I stated for the moral attributes of God as arising from the same illusion of the imagination which leads the vulgar to ascribe to him the human form and organs of perception analogous to our own. But the comparison is by no means just. There is obviously a wide distinction between the possession of a power and the being limited to the exercise of that power in a particular way. The former is always a perfection, the latter is a mark of an imperfect and dependent being. Thus the possession of knowledge is a perfection, and we may venture to ascribe it in an infinite degree to the Deity ;

* On this subject see Cudworth, Intel. System, p. 204.

but it would be rash in us, from what we experience in ourselves, to conclude that the Deity investigates truth by those slow processes of deduction which are suited to the weakness of the human faculties. In like manner, although it would be absurd to suppose that the Deity hears and sees in a way analogous to what we experience in ourselves, we *may* without impiety conclude, nay, we *must* from the fact believe, that he possesses in an infinite degree of perfection all our powers of perception, because it is from him that we have received them. “He “that made the eye shall he not see? He that “made the ear shall he not hear?”—Not indeed by means of bodily organs similar to ours, but in some way far above the reach of our comprehension.

The argument which these considerations afford for the great and important truth I wish to establish at present is irresistible. Moral excellence appears obviously to constitute the chief perfection of the human mind ; and we cannot help considering the moral attributes of God as claiming, in a more especial manner, our love and adoration than either his wisdom or power.

With respect to that particular attribute of the Deity, to which the following reasonings more immediately relate, the general argument applies with singular force. The peculiar sentiment of approbation with which we regard the virtue of beneficence in others, and the peculiar satisfaction with which we reflect on such of our actions as have contributed to the happiness of mankind ; to which

we may add the exquisite pleasure accompanying the exercise of all the kind affections, naturally lead us to consider benevolence or goodness as the supreme attribute of God. It is difficult indeed to conceive what other motive could have induced a Being, completely and independently happy, to call his creatures into existence.

In this manner, then, without going farther than our own moral perceptions, we have a strong argument for the moral attributes of God: and this argument will strike us with the greater force in proportion to the culture which our moral perceptions have received. The same observation may be applied to the moral argument for a future state. The effect of both these arguments on the mind may be in a great measure destroyed by dissipation and profligacy; or (on the other hand) by a sedulous and reverential attention to the moral suggestions of our own breasts, it may be identified with all our habits of thought and of action. It is owing to this that, while the truths of natural religion are regarded by some as the dreams of a warm imagination, they command the assent of others with the evidence of intuitive certainty. “Be persuaded” (says Shaftesbury) “that wisdom is more from the *heart* than from the *head*. *Feel* goodness, and “you will see all things fair and good.”—“Dwell “with honesty, and beauty, and order; study and “love what is of this kind, and in time you will “know and love the Author.” *

* Letter Sixth to a Student at the University.

Impressed with a conviction of the justness and importance of this remark, I have always been of opinion that those who have written in defence of natural religion have insisted too much on the cold metaphysical argument, which can only prove the power and wisdom of the Deity, and have addressed themselves too little to our moral constitution. It must be owing to this that some sceptical writers, who have admitted the evidence for the *physical* attributes of God, have denied or doubted of the evidence for his *moral* attributes. This in particular was the case with Lord Bolingbroke.* The arguments for the physical attributes are addressed to the understanding alone ; those for the moral attributes to the heart. If you wish to convince a person who affects to be sceptical on *this* subject, you must begin with attempting to rouse his moral feelings. Convince him of the dignity of his nature, and inspire him with the love of virtue and of mankind, and you have gone far towards accomplishing your object. Just and comfortable views of Providence and of man's future destination will follow of course. And here, by the way, we may remark the additional reason which these considerations suggest, why the study of natural religion should not be considered as the foundation of moral philosophy, inasmuch as they show that just views of religion *presuppose* an examination of the moral constitution of man.

The foregoing reasonings rest entirely on our

* Philosophical Works, Vol. IV. Sections 40, 41.

own moral perceptions, without any reference to facts collected from without ; and I apprehend that it is only after establishing *a priori* this presumption for the divine goodness that we can proceed to examine the fact with safety. It is true, indeed, that, independently of this presumption, the disorders we see would not demonstrate ill intention in the Author of the Universe, as it would be still possible that the apparent disorders in that small part of it which falls under our observation might contribute to the happiness and perfection of the whole system. But the contrary supposition would be equally possible, that there is nothing absolutely good in the universe, and that the communication of suffering is the ultimate end of the laws by which it is governed.

The argument for the goodness of God, derived from our own moral constitution, and strengthened by the consideration of our ignorance of the plans of Providence, affords an answer to all the objections which have been urged against this attribute of the Deity. And the answer is conclusive, whatever the state of the fact may be with respect to the magnitude of the evils of which we complain.

“ Imagine only,” (says Shaftesbury) “ some person entirely a stranger to navigation, and ignorant of the nature of sea or waters : How great his astonishment, when, finding himself on board some vessel anchored at sea remote from all land prospect, whilst it was yet a calm, he

“viewed the ponderous machine firm and motionless in the midst of the smooth ocean, and considered its foundation beneath, together with its cordage, masts, and sails above—how easily would he see the *whole* one regular structure, all things depending on another; the uses of the rooms below, the lodgements, and the conveniences of men and stores? But, being ignorant of the intent or design of all above, would he pronounce the masts and cordage to be useless and cumbersome, and for this reason condemn the frame and despise the Architect? O! my friend, let us not thus betray our ignorance, but consider where we are, and in what an universe. Think of the many parts of the vast machine in which we have so little insight, and of which it is impossible we should know the ends and uses: when, instead of seeing to the highest pendants, we see only some lower deck, and are in this dark case of flesh confined even to the hold and meanest station of the vessel.”

But although this answer might silence our objections, something more is requisite on a subject so momentous, to support our confidence, and to animate our hopes. If no account could be given of the evils of life, but that they *may possibly* be good relatively to the whole universe;—still more, if it should appear that the sufferings of life overbalance its enjoyments, it could hardly be expected that any speculative reasoning would have much effect in banishing the melancholy suggestions of

scepticism. We are therefore naturally led, in the *first* place, to inquire whether some explanation may not be given *of the origin of evil*, from a consideration of the facts which fall under our notice; and, *secondly*, to compare together the happiness and the misery which the world exhibits.

The question concerning *the origin of evil* has, from the earliest times, employed the ingenuity of speculative men; and various theories have been proposed to solve the difficulty. The most celebrated of these are the following:—

- (1.) The Doctrine of Pre-existence.
- (2.) The Doctrine of the Manichæans.
- (3.) The Doctrine of Optimism.

1. According to the first hypothesis the evils we suffer at present are punishments and expiations of moral delinquencies committed in a former stage of our being.

This was a favourite opinion of the ancient philosophers, and is maintained by Socrates in the *Phedon* of Plato, where the first idea of the doctrine seems to be ascribed to Orpheus as its author.* “The disciples of Orpheus” (says he) “called the body a prison, because the soul is here in a state of punishment till it has expiated the faults that it committed in Heaven. Souls that are too much given to bodily pleasures, and are in a manner besotted, wander upon the earth, and are put into new bodies; for all sensuality and

* See Ramsay’s Discourse on the Mythology of the Pagans.

“ passion cause the soul to have a stronger attachment to the body, make her fancy that she is of the same nature, and render her in a manner corporeal, so that she contracts an incapacity of flying away into another life. Oppressed with the weight of her impurity and corruption, she sinks again into matter, and becomes thereby disabled to remount towards the regions of purity, and attain to a re-union with her principle.”

In the dialogue entitled *Politicus*, Plato, mentioning this primitive state of man, calls it the reign of Saturn, and describes it thus :—“ God was then the Prince and common Father of all ; he governed the world by himself, as he governs it now by inferior deities ; rage and cruelty did not then prevail upon earth ; war and sedition were not so much as known. God himself took care of the sustenance of mankind, and was their guardian and shepherd. There were no magistrates nor civil polity as there are now. In those happy days men sprung out of the bosom of the earth, which produced them of itself like flowers and trees. The fertile fields yielded fruits and corn without the labour of tillage. Mankind stood in no need of raiment to cover their bodies, being troubled with no inclemency of the seasons ; and they took their rest on turf of a perpetual verdure. Under the reign of Jupiter, Saturn, the master of the universe, having quitted the reins of his empire, hid himself in an inaccessible retreat. The inferior gods who governed under him retired

“ likewise ; the very foundations of the world were
“ shaken by motions contrary to its principle and
“ its end, and it lost its beauty and its lustre. Then
“ it was that good and evil were blended together.
“ But in the end, lest the world should be plunged
“ in an eternal abyss of confusion, God, the Author
“ of the Primitive Order, will appear again and re-
“ sume the reins of empire. Then he will change,
“ amend, embellish, and restore the whole frame of
“ nature, and put an end to decay, to age, to dis-
“ eases, and to death.”

In order to understand some expressions in the foregoing passage, it is necessary to know that Plato gave the name of the *first earth* to the place where souls made their abode before their degradation. “ The earth ” (he says) “ is immense ; we know, and we inhabit only a small corner of it. That etherial earth, the ancient abode of souls, is placed in the pure regions of Heaven, where the stars are seated. We that live in this low abyss are apt enough to fancy that we are in a high place, and we call the air the heavens : just like a man that from the bottom of the sea should view the sun and the stars through the water, and fancy the ocean to be the firmament itself. But if we had wings to mount on high we should see that THERE is the true Heaven, the true light, and the true earth. As in the sea everything is altered and disfigured by the salts that abound in it, so in our present earth everything is deformed, corrupted, and in a ruinous condition if com-

“pared with the primitive earth.” Of this ethereal earth, whereof ours is only a broken crust, Plato gives afterwards a magnificent description. “Every thing there” (says he) “was beautiful, harmonious, and transparent; fruits of an excellent taste grew there naturally; and it was watered with rivers of nectar. They there breathed the light, as we here breathe the air, and they drank waters purer than air itself.”

The sublimity of some of these ideas cannot be disputed; and it would lead into a wide field of interesting disquisition to trace their origin and their connection with other systems which have been adopted in different countries. At present we are concerned with this doctrine only in so far as it is offered as an account of the origin of evil; and for this purpose it is sufficient to remark, *1st*, That it is merely an hypothesis unsupported by any evidence; and *2d*, That the hypothesis (even if we were to admit it) only removes the difficulty a little out of sight, without affording any explanation of it. If the permission of evil in any former stage of our being was consistent with the perfections of God, why not in that state which we occupy at present? I pass over various weighty objections which might be founded on the absurdity of supposing the soul to expiate by its present sufferings faults of which it does not now retain any remembrance, and for which, of consequence, it cannot feel any remorse; a supposition plainly inconsistent with itself, inasmuch as the only effect of *punish-*

ment, as a remedy for our moral diseases, must arise from the experimental warning it affords to the delinquent of the inseparable connection between vice and misery.

2d, The second theory that was mentioned with respect to the origin of evil is that of the Manichæans, who endeavour to obviate the difficulty by the opposite agencies of two co-eternal and independent principles, the one the author of all the good, the other of all the evil in the universe.

This theory derives its name from Manichæus or Manes, a Chaldean or Babylonian by birth, who was born about the year 240 of the Christian era. The theory, however, is of a much more early origin, having been taught by the Persian Magi, whose doctrines on the subject are fully explained by Plutarch in his Treatise of Isis and Osiris. “Zoroaster” (he tells us) “taught that there are two gods, “contrary to each other in their operations; a good “and an evil principle. To the former he gave the “name of *Oromazes*, and to the latter that of *Arimanius*. The one, he says, resembles light and “truth, the other darkness and ignorance. There “is likewise a middle god between these two, named “*Mythras*. The Magi add, that Oromazes is born “of the purest light, and Arimanius of darkness; “that they continually make war upon one another; and that Oromazes made six genii, goodness, truth, justice, wisdom, plenty, and joy; and “Arimanius made six others to oppose them, malice, falsehood, injustice, folly, want, and sadness.”

They hold farther, that “ a time will come, appointed by fate, when Arimanius will be entirely destroyed and extirpated ; the earth will change its form, and become plain and even ; and happy men will have only one and the same life, language, and government.” *

Of the particular form in which this doctrine was afterwards proposed by Manes, a full account is given by Beausobre in his History of Manichæism, an abstract of which account may be found in Jortin’s Remarks on Ecclesiastical History. It is not worth our while at present to enter into any details on the subject.

In modern times M. Bayle has employed all the powers of his lively and acute genius in adorning the Manichæan system, and in representing it as the most plausible of all the solutions that have ever been proposed of the origin of evil. He grants, at the same time, that this system is indefensible ; and hence takes occasion to insinuate the futility of human reason, and to recommend to his readers an unlimited scepticism as the most important lesson to be learned from the controversy.

The celebrity of M. Bayle’s name has induced several writers of eminence to examine this part of his works with a greater degree of attention than so very absurd a speculation seems to have merited. Among others Le Clerc, first in his *Parrhasiana*, and afterwards in his *Bibliothèque Choisie*. I shall not enter at all into the discussion, nor even attempt

* See Ramsay on the Mythology of the Pagans.

a statement of the reasonings *a priori* which have been urged in opposition to Bayle. A sufficient refutation of his opinions on this point may I hope be derived from what has been already advanced in proof of the *unity of design* manifested in every part of nature ; a proposition which I shall have occasion to illustrate still more fully in the farther prosecution of this argument, and which appears to have struck Mr Hume himself so forcibly, that he rejects the supposition of two opposite principles “ *as altogether unsuitable to the phenomena of the universe.*”

Before leaving this head it may be worth while to remark, that what we know of the tenets of this sect is derived entirely from the writings of their adversaries, as none of their own have survived to modern times. The most authentic documents of them may unquestionably be collected from the works of St Augustine, who was himself educated in the heretical opinions of the Manichæans, and did not abandon them till he was able to think and to judge for himself. It may be reasonably presumed, therefore, not only that he was thoroughly acquainted with the details of their history, but that he represents them without any undue prejudice against their spirit and tendency.

3d, The fundamental principle of the *Optimists* is, that all events are ordered for the best ; and that the evils which we suffer are parts of a great system conducted by Almighty power under the direction of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Under this general title, however, are comprehended two very different descriptions of philosophers,—those who admit, and those who deny the freedom of human actions and the accountableness of man as a moral agent. The former only contend that every thing is right, so far as it is the work of God ; and endeavour to show that the creation of beings endowed with free will, and consequently liable to moral delinquency ; and the government of the world by general laws, from which occasional evils *must* result, furnish no solid objection to the perfection of the universe. But they hold at the same time, that, although the permission of moral evil does not detract from the goodness of God, it is nevertheless imputable to man as a fault, and renders him justly obnoxious to punishment. This system (under a variety of different forms) has been in all ages maintained by the best and wisest philosophers, who, while they were anxious to vindicate the perfections of the Deity, saw the importance of stating their doctrine in a manner consistent with man's free will and moral agency. I need scarcely add, that this is precisely the doctrine of Scripture. “ The Judge of the whole “ earth, shall he not do right ?”—“ It is impossible “ but that offences will come ; but woe unto him “ through whom they come.” *

* “ The result of what Locke advances on this subject,” “ (says Dr Warton,) is, that we have a power of doing what we “ will. If it be the occasion of disorder, it is the cause of “ order, of all the moral order that appears in the world. Had

It is of great importance to attend to the distinction between these two systems, because it is customary among sceptical writers to confound them studiously together, in order to extend to both that ridicule to which the latter is justly entitled. This in particular was the case with *Voltaire*, who in many parts of his works, and more especially in a small treatise entitled *Candide ou l'Optimisme*, has exerted all the powers of his wit and ingenuity on the subject, arriving at last at this general conclusion, that the only possible way of reconciling the origin of evil with the moral attributes of God is to deny his omnipotence.

The attempt which this very lively writer, as well as many other modern sceptics have made to ridicule the scheme of *optimism*, has been much facilitated by the confused and inaccurate manner in which it has been stated by some who have proposed and defended it with the best intentions. Among this number we must include Pope, who

“liberty been excluded, virtue had been excluded with it.
“And if this had been the case, the world could have had no
“charms, no beauties sufficient to recommend it to him who
“made it. In short, all other powers and perfections would
“have been very defective without this, which is truly the
“life and spirit of the whole creation.”—Warton’s Notes on Pope.

In what part of Locke’s works Warton found the above passage he has not mentioned; and I confess I have some suspicion that he has committed a mistake with respect to the author. The passage, however, does Locke no discredit, and I have no doubt expresses his real sentiments on the subject.

undoubtedly meant to inculcate this system in its most unexceptionable form, but who has fallen into various unguarded expressions that appear favourable to fatalism.

If plagues and earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?
&c. &c. &c.

With respect to these unguarded expressions, there is an anecdote mentioned by Dr Warton in his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, that helps to account for their admission into this poem, without leading us to question the sincerity of Pope's zeal for the great principles of morality and religion. The late Lord Bathurst, we are told, had read the whole scheme of the *Essay on Man* in the handwriting of Bolingbroke, and drawn up in a series of propositions, which Pope was to versify and illustrate. The same author mentions, upon what he thinks good authority, that Bolingbroke was accustomed to ridicule Pope, as not understanding the drift of his own principles in their full extent; an anecdote which is by no means improbable, when we compare the passage already quoted, and some others to the same purpose, with the author's explicit declarations in favour of man's free agency.

What makes all physical and moral ill?—
There deviates nature, and here wanders will.

And still more directly in his *Universal Prayer*.

Yet gav'st me in this dark estate,
To know the good from ill ;
And binding Nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

I have entered into these particulars with respect to the Essay on Man, partly with a view of illustrating the distinction already hinted at between the two different forms in which the system of optimism has been proposed, and partly to have an opportunity of directing the attention of my readers to the noblest specimen of philosophical poetry which our language affords ; and which, with the exception of a very few passages, contains a valuable summary of all that human reason has been able hitherto to advance in justification of the moral government of God. I now proceed to state the principal heads of this argument in that form in which it appears most satisfactory to my own mind ; premising only, that, after all that reason can allege on this subject, there still remain insuperable difficulties connected with it which nothing but revelation can explain.

All the different subjects of human complaint may be reduced to two classes, *moral* and *physical* evils : the former comprehending those which arise from the abuse of free-will ; the latter those which result from the established laws of nature, and which man cannot prevent by his own efforts. These two classes of our evils, although they are often blended together in fact, will require, in the prosecution of this argument, a separate consideration.

I. It is justly observed by Butler, “ that all we
“ enjoy, and a great part of what we suffer, is *put*
“ *in our own power* ; for pleasure and pain are
“ the consequences of our actions ; and we are en-
“ dued by the Author of our Nature with capacities
“ for *foreseeing* these consequences. We find by
“ experience he does not so much as preserve our
“ lives, exclusively of our own care and attention,
“ to provide ourselves with, and to make sure of
“ that sustenance by which he has appointed our
“ lives shall be preserved, and without which he
“ has appointed they shall not be preserved at all.
“ And in general we foresee, that the external
“ things which are the objects of our various pas-
“ sions can neither be obtained nor enjoyed with-
“ out exerting ourselves in such and such manners ;
“ but by thus exerting ourselves we obtain and
“ enjoy those objects in which our natural good
“ consists. I know not that we have any one kind
“ or degree of enjoyment but by the means of our
“ own actions. And by prudence and care we
“ may for the most part pass our days in tolerable
“ ease and quiet ; or, on the contrary, we may, by
“ rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even
“ by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as
“ ever we please.”

Now, in so far as happiness and misery depends on ourselves, the question with respect to the permission of evil is reduced to this, why was man made a free agent ? Or, in other words, why does not the Author of Nature make his creatures hap-

py without the instrumentality of their own actions, and put it out of their power to incur misery by vice and folly? A question to which (if it is not too presumptuous to subject it to our discussion,) the two following considerations seem to afford a sufficient answer.

1st, In the first place, we may observe that perhaps the object of the Deity in the government of the world is not merely to communicate happiness, but to form his creatures to moral excellence; a purpose for the accomplishment of which it was absolutely necessary to bestow on them a freedom of choice between good and evil. This observation is hinted at by Butler in the following passage:—
“ Perhaps the Divine goodness, with which, if I
“ mistake not, we make very free in our specula-
“ tions, may not be a bare single disposition to pro-
“ duce happiness; but a disposition to make the
“ good, the faithful, the honest man happy. Per-
“ haps an infinitely perfect mind may be pleased
“ with seeing his creatures behave suitably to the
“ nature which he has given them; to the relations
“ in which he has placed them to each other; and
“ to that which they stand in to himself, which
“ during their existence is even necessary, and
“ which is the most important one of all. Per-
“ haps, I say, an infinitely perfect mind may be
“ pleased with the moral piety of moral agents in
“ and for itself, as well as upon account of its be-
“ ing essentially conducive to the happiness of his
“ creation.”

2d, A second supposition which may be suggested in answer to the foregoing question is, that perhaps the enjoyment of high degrees of happiness may necessarily require the previous acquisition of virtuous habits ; in which case a greater sum of happiness is produced by the present order of things than could have been gained by any other. Nor is this merely a gratuitous supposition ; for we know from the fact, that the highest enjoyments of which our nature is susceptible arise from a conscientious discharge of our duty, and from the possession of those qualities which virtuous habits have a tendency to form or to inspire.

The sufferings produced by vice are on this supposition instances of the goodness of God, no less than the happiness resulting from virtue. The final cause of both is the same,—to promote the improvement of our nature ; as it is from the same motive of love that an affectionate parent rewards the obedience, and punishes the disobedience of his child. It is, I think, a very fine and profound observation of *Maupertuis*, “ that the concern which
 “ arises from repentance and remorse is more allied
 “ to pleasure than to pain. It contains a cure for
 “ that distress which it brings along with it, and
 “ a preservative against future pains of the same
 “ kind. The more sensibly they are felt at any
 “ particular time we shall be in less danger of feel-
 “ ing them afterwards.” * I would add, however,

* *Essai de Philosophie Morale*, Chap. iii.

An idea similar to this occurs in the following lines of *De Lille* :

as a necessary limitation of this remark, that it applies only to those slighter deviations from duty which may occasionally occur in the conduct of men habitually virtuous ; for in the case of crimes of a deeper dye, and which unfit a man to continue any longer a member of society, remorse produces the unmixed agonies of despair.

II. These observations justify Providence not only for the permission of moral evil, but for the permission of many things which are commonly complained of as physical evils. How great is the proportion of these which are the obvious consequences of our vices and prejudices ; and which, so far from being a necessary part of the order of nature, seem intended, in the progress of human affairs, as a gradual remedy against the causes which produce them ? Suppose, for a moment, vice and prejudice banished from the world, what a train of miseries would be banished along with them ! The physical evils that would remain would in truth almost vanish into nothing, when compared with the magnitude of those under which the human race groans at present. Now, whatever evils are consequences of vice and prejudice are not a *necessary* part of the order of nature. On the contrary, they lead to a correction of the abuses from which

— L'âme, quelquefois, par le remords s'épure ;
Il fait servir au bien le vice qui n'est plus,
Et cet enfant du crime est garant des vertus.

L'Imagination, Chant. ii.

they spring. They warn us that there is something amiss in our own conduct or in that of other men ; and they stimulate our exertions in the search of a remedy, as those occasional pains to which the body is liable tend to the preservation of health and vigour by the intimation they give of our internal disorders.

Some of our other complaints with respect to the lot of humanity will be found, on examination, to arise from partial views of the constitution of man, and from a want of attention to the circumstances which promote his improvement, or which constitute his happiness. Such are those which sceptics have so often founded on a consideration of that life of labour and exertion both of body and of mind to which we are doomed by the necessities of our nature ;—doomed as we are to “ eat our bread in the “ sweat of our brows.”

When we compare the condition of man at the moment of his first appearance on this scene with that of some other animals, he appears to be in many respects their inferior. His infancy is more helpless and of much longer duration ; and even after the care of the parent has reared him to maturity he is destitute of the essential advantages they enjoy in consequence of the formation of their bodies, and of the variety of their instincts. One animal is armed with the horn, another with the tusk, a third with the paw ; most of them are covered with furs, or with skins of a sufficient thickness to

protect them from the inclemencies of the seasons ; and all of them are directed by instinct in what manner they may choose or construct the most convenient habitation for securing themselves from danger, and for rearing their offspring. The human infant alone enters the world naked and unarmed ; exposed without a covering to the fury of the elements ; surrounded with enemies which far surpass him in strength or agility ; and totally ignorant in what way he is to procure the comforts or even the necessaries of life. Notwithstanding, however, the unpromising aspect of his original condition, *man* has no just cause to complain of the bounty of nature ; for it is in the apparent disadvantages of his condition, in the multiplicity of his wants, and in the urgency of his necessities, that the foundation is laid of that superiority which he is destined to acquire over all the other inhabitants of the globe. “ *Flens animal,*” (says Pliny, speaking of the human infant,) “ *Flens animal, cæteris imperaturum.*”

The necessity of certain inconveniences in our external circumstances to rouse the energies and to improve the capacities of the human mind, is strongly illustrated by the comparatively low state of the intellectual powers, in such tribes of our species as derive the necessaries and accommodations of life from the immediate bounty of nature. No other explanation can, I think, be given of those peculiarities in the genius of some of the South Sea islanders, which have been remarked by some of our late

navigators, particularly by Dr Forster in his Account of the Inhabitants of Otaheite. “ The natives of “ Otaheite,” (he informs us,) “ and the adjacent Society Isles, are generally of a lively brisk temper, “ great lovers of mirth and laughter, and of an “ open, easy, benevolent character. Their natural “ levity hinders them from paying a long attention “ to any one thing. You might as well undertake “ to fix mercury as to keep their mind steady on the “ same subject.”

Such indeed is the constitution of the human mind, that it may be safely affirmed that any individual might be fixed through life in a state of infantine imbecility, by withholding every stimulus to his active exertions, and by gratifying every want as fast as it arose. It is with much judgment, therefore, that Virgil mentions the origin of the arts as a necessary consequence of the changes in the natural world subsequent to the golden age.

“ Tum variæ venere artes : labor omnia vicit

“ Improbis, et duris urgens in rebus egestas.’

And that he refers this introduction of indigence and labour to a benevolent intention in Providence.

“ Pater ipse colendi

“ Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem

“ Movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda,

“ Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.”

Nor is the activity of life merely the school of wisdom and of virtue to man ; it is the great source of his present *enjoyment*.

“ If we attempt” (says Dr Ferguson) “ to conceive such a scene as some sceptics would require to evince the wisdom and goodness of God, a scene in which every desire were at once gratified without delay, difficulty or trouble, it is evident that on such supposition the end of every active pursuit would be anticipated ; exertion would be prevented, every faculty remain unemployed, and mind itself would be no more than a consciousness of languor under an oppression of weariness, such as satiety and continued inoccupation are known to produce.

“ On this supposition all the active powers which distinguish human nature would be superfluous, and only serve to disturb his peace, or to sour the taste of those inferior pleasures which appear to be consistent with indolence and sloth.*

“ The happiness of man when most distinguished,” (continues the same author,) “ is not proportioned to his external possessions, but to the exertion and application of his faculties. It is not proportioned to his exemption from danger, but to the magnanimity, courage, and fortitude with which he acts. It is not proportioned to the benefits he receives, but to those he bestows ; or rather to the candour and benevolence with which, as a person obliging and obliged, he is ready to embrace his fellow-creatures, and to acknowledge or reward their merits. Even while he complains of his lot he is not unhappy. His

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. p. 178.

“ complaints are no more than the symptoms of a
“ mind that is engaged in some pursuit, by which
“ his wishes are engrossed, but of which the end
“ is still unobtained. In the absence of such occu-
“ pations and troubles as are prescribed by neces-
“ sity, he devises for the most part a similar
“ course of occupations, trouble, difficulty, and dan-
“ ger for himself.

“ The rich and the powerful, (say the vulgar,)
“ are happy, for they are exempted from labour
“ and care. Their pleasures come unsought for,
“ and without any alloy of pain. But what are
“ the high objects of ambition to which the wealthy
“ and the powerful aspire? Are they not often
“ situations of great trouble and danger, in conti-
“ nual application to arduous affairs of state, or in
“ frequent exposure to the dangers of war? What
“ do the idle devise to fill up the blank of real
“ affairs? Not a bed of repose, nor a succession
“ of inert and slothful enjoyments; they devise
“ sports that engage them in labour and toil not
“ less severe than that of the indigent man who
“ works for his bread; and expose themselves to
“ dangers not less real than those which occur in
“ what are thought the most hazardous pursuits of
“ human life.

“ In the intermission of business, and in the ab-
“ sence of danger, what has the secure and the idle,
“ under the denomination of play, devised for his
“ own recreation? A course of serious and intense
“ application, a state of suspense between good and

“ ill fortune, between profit and loss. While he
“ strenuously labours to obtain the one and to avoid
“ the other, he calls the one a *good* and the other
“ an *evil*; but he has himself voluntarily incurred
“ the chance of good and evil. He exults in gain,
“ and he laments his loss; but he still freely em-
“ braces the chance by which he is exposed to
“ one or the other. The game, such as it is, he
“ considers as a fit pastime for himself; and though
“ he complains of his fortune when unsuccessful, he
“ is never so unreasonable as to arraign the Inven-
“ tor of the game for having admitted the possibili-
“ ty of ill as well as good fortune.

“ The passion for play is comparatively mean
“ and unworthy; but the illustration it brings to
“ the condition of man is apposite, and will justify
“ the terms in which we conclude, that in the game
“ of human life the Inventor knew well how to
“ accommodate the players.” *

For the subjects of those complaints which have been now under our consideration, a foundation is laid in the general laws of nature, and in the constitution of the human mind. The one is adapted to the other, as the fin of the fish is adapted to the water, or the wing of the bird to the air; and if the order of things was changed in conformity to our wishes, the world would be no longer a scene fitted for such beings as inhabit it at present. Our complaints are founded in our ignorant conceptions

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. pp. 185, 186, 187.

of our real good, which lead us to mistake what are in truth excellencies and beauties in the scheme of Providence for imperfections and deformities.

The circumstances on which these complaints are founded are in some degree common to the whole race ; and wherever this is the case, I believe it will not be difficult to trace the beneficent purposes of Providence. But what account shall we give of the evils produced by what are commonly called the *accidents* of life ; accidents from which no state of society, how perfect soever, can possibly be exempted ; and which, if they be subservient to any benevolent purposes, contribute to none within the sphere of our knowledge ? What account shall we give of those cruel calamities which so often overwhelm individuals, and aggravate the miseries of their condition so far beyond the common lot of humanity ? That troubles should occur in the life of man we can see obvious reasons ; and in fact they do occur in a sufficient degree in the life of the most fortunate. But why those awful strokes that so often fall on men of inoffensive or virtuous habits, and who do not seem to stand more in need of the school of adversity than many around them who enjoy in security all the goods of fortune ?

On such occasions we must no doubt be frequently forced to acknowledge that the ways of Providence are unsearchable, and we must strive to fortify our minds by the pious hope, that the sufferings we endure at present are subservient to some beneficial plan which we are unable to com-

prehend. In the meantime, it is of the utmost consequence for us always to recollect, that accidents of this sort are inseparable from a state of things where the inhabitants are free-agents, and where the Deity governs by general laws. They could not be prevented but by particular interpositions, or in other words, by suspending occasionally the general laws by which his administration is conducted. That the evils resulting from such suspensions would far outweigh the partial good to be gained from them is obvious even to our limited faculties.

With respect to these *general laws*, their tendency will be found in every instance favourable to order and to happiness. This observation, I am persuaded, will appear, upon an accurate examination, to hold without any exception whatever; and it is one of the noblest employments of philosophy to verify and illustrate its universality, by investigating the beneficent purposes to which the laws of nature are subservient. Now it is evidently from these general laws alone that the ultimate ends of Providence can be judged of, and not from their accidental collisions with the partial interests of individuals; collisions, too, which so often arise from an abuse of their moral liberty. It is the great error of the vulgar (who are incapable of comprehensive views) to attempt to read the ways of Providence in particular events, and to judge favourably or unfavourably of the order of the universe from its accidental effects with respect to them-

selves or their friends. Perhaps indeed this disposition is inseparable in some degree from the weakness of humanity. But surely *it is* a weakness that we ought to strive to correct ; and the more we *do* correct it, the more pleasing our conceptions of the universe become. Accidental inconveniences disappear when compared with the magnitude of the advantages which it is the object of the general laws to secure : “ Or ” (as one author has expressed it) “ scattered evils are lost in the blaze “ of superabundant goodness, as the spots on the “ disk of the sun are lost in the splendour of his “ rays.”

While the laws of nature thus appear to be favourable to order and to happiness in their general tendency, salutary effects arise from the influence of “ time and chance ” on human affairs. If the goods of fortune were distributed with an exact regard to the merits of individuals, the selfish passions of men would coincide in every instance with the sense of duty ; and no occasion would be furnished for those efforts of self denial by which our characters are displayed, and our moral habits confirmed.

Many of our moral qualities, too, are the result of habits which imply the existence of physical evil. Patience, fortitude, humanity, all suppose a scene in which sufferings are to be endured in our own case, or relieved in the case of others.

Thus it appears not only that partial evils *may* be good with respect to the whole system, but that

their tendency *is* beneficial, on the whole, even to that small part of it which we see.

The argument for the goodness of God, which arises from the foregoing considerations, will be much strengthened if it shall appear farther, that the sum of happiness in human life far exceeds the sum of misery.* For our satisfaction on this point,

* An essay on this subject by Maupertuis, published about the middle of the last century, maintaining the preponderance of misery over happiness in human life, drew a good deal of attention, both in France and England, from the high mathematical reputation of the author. His reasonings are not of sufficient consequence to induce me to interrupt the train of these observations by a formal refutation, but I shall touch in this note on the principal heads of his argument.

1. He lays great stress on the love of variety, or the perpetual desire of changing our situation. “*La vie est-elle autre chose qu’un souhait continuel de changer de perception? elle se passe dans les desirs ; et tout l’intervalle qui en sépare l’accomplissement nous le voudrions anéanti.*”

In answer to this it may be remarked, that our perpetual desire of change is not always a proof of a sense of misery. It often arises from a desire of some *addition to our happiness*, which we imagine to be placed within our reach. Maupertuis thinks that the interval between the commencement of desire and the enjoyment is painful. The contrary has been the common opinion, and is the just one.

’Tis the pursuit rewards the active mind,
And what in rest we seek in toil we find.

2. Maupertuis considers our love of amusement as a proof of our misery. “*Tous les divertissemens des hommes prouvent le malheur de leur condition. Ce n’est que pour éviter*

it will be necessary for us to recur again to the distinction formerly made between *moral* and *physical*

“ des perceptions fâcheuses que celui-ci joue aux échecs, que
 “ cet autre court à la chasse : Tous cherchent dans des occupa-
 “ tions serieuses ou frivoles l’oubli d’eux-mêmes.”

On the contrary, we never desire amusement but when our situation is comparatively easy and comfortable.

3. Maupertuis asserts that few would choose to live over their lives a second time. “ On en trouvera bien peu qui voulus-
 “ sent recommencer leur vie telle qu’elle a été, qui voulussent
 “ repasser par tous les mêmes états dans lesquels ils se sont
 “ trouvés.”

Our sentiments on this subject are warped by our opinions, our hopes, and our fears, concerning futurity. The fact may be doubted in all its extent. *Admitting* the fact, it would only prove, that, with the feelings we have at the close of life, we could not relish those pleasures we formerly enjoyed. A man after the pleasures of the day may enjoy the repose of night, without giving any ground to conclude that the day was unhappy. Even supposing the mind to retain its vigour and its sensibility, the repetition of the same pleasures would produce satiety; but our pleasures are not the less real while we continue to enjoy them, that they cease to please by long repetition.

At an earlier period than Maupertuis, Wollaston indulged views of human life tinctured in some degree with the same gloom, and is represented by Bolingbroke, who calls him “ a
 “ whining philosopher,” as maintaining the same paradox with regard to the preponderance of misery. In this instance Bolingbroke appears to me to have done him considerable injustice; but supposing the charge to be well grounded, (a question which we have not time to settle at present,) the following remarks of the noble author may be safely subscribed to.

“ Let us be convinced, however, in opposition to atheists and
 “ divines, that the general state of mankind, in the present
 “ scheme of Providence, is a state not only tolerable but hap-
 “ py. Without having Wollaston’s balance, wherein he weighs

evils, and to consider how the balance appears to stand between *them* and the two corresponding sources of happiness or good, upon a general survey of what passes in the world.

Before entering on the first of these heads, I think it necessary to observe, that when I speak of the preponderancy of *moral good* in the world, I do not mean to draw any inference in favour of the secret springs of human conduct, as they appear in the sight of that Being who alone is acquainted with every thought of the heart ; but only to illustrate the kind provision which is made in the constitution of man, and in the circumstances of his

“ happiness and misery even to grains and scruples, we may
 “ pronounce that there is much more good than evil in it ;
 “ and prove what we pronounce even by his authority, and
 “ that of all those who deny it like him, if any such authority
 “ can be wanting. It is plain that every man has more good
 “ than evil in actual enjoyment, or in prospect, since every man
 “ prefers existing as he is to non-existence, and since none of
 “ them, not those who suffer the worst accidents in life, are
 “ willing to abandon it, and to go out of the state these de-
 “ claimers represent to be so miserable. The proposition may
 “ be advanced thus generally, because there are very few ex-
 “ amples to the contrary, and those are of men run mad by
 “ distemper, or made so by some prevailing enthusiasm. * * *
 “ What our author’s circumstances were of any kind I am ig-
 “ norant. But whatever they were I am persuaded you will
 “ be of my opinion, that any charitable person who had offered
 “ to cut his throat, in order only to deliver him from the mi-
 “ series he complained of in such lamentable terms, would have
 “ been very ill received.”—Bolingbroke’s Philosophical Works,
 Vol. IV. pp. 386, 387.

condition, for the growth and culture of those dispositions which are favourable to the happiness of individuals, and to the good order of society;—of those dispositions, in short, which it is the object of wise laws to secure, and of wise systems of education to encourage and to cherish. Nor does the scope of my argument lead to any conclusion concerning the comparative numbers of good and bad men.* The lives of the best will not bear a moment's comparison with the moral law engraven on our hearts; but still it may be true, that (corrupted as mankind are,) the proportion of human life which is spent in vice is inconsiderable when compared with the whole of its extent. The fact undoubtedly, if on examination it should appear at all probable, would afford an additional illustration of the beneficent arrangements made by our Creator for the good order and for the happiness of this world; and might suggest a salutary lesson to legislators to study *the intentions of nature* as the best guides in the science of jurisprudence; or (to express myself in less equivocal language) to trust, in the administration of human affairs, *more* than they have been commonly disposed to do, to those provisions which have been made for the comfort and for the improvement of the species by the beneficent wisdom of God.

1. And here, in the first place, I would observe, with respect to the balance of *moral* good and evil,

* See Dr Law's Translation of Archbishop King's Essay on the Origin of Evil, p. 420, Note (A A.) Fourth Edition.

that a fact already taken notice of in treating of the *desire of power* affords of itself a complete decision of the question. How few are the opportunities which most individuals enjoy of rendering any extensive service to their fellow-creatures! And how completely is it in the power of the most insignificant person to disturb the happiness of thousands! If the benevolent dispositions of mankind, therefore, had not a very decided predominance over the principles which give rise to competition and enmity, what a different aspect would society have from what it actually presents to us; or rather, how would it be possible for the existence of society to be continued?

2. There is another fact which strongly confirms the same conclusion,—the constant exertion and circumspection necessary to acquire and maintain a good name in the world; a circumspection not only in avoiding any gross violation of duty, but in avoiding even the appearance of evil. For how often does it happen that a well-earned reputation, the fruit of a long and virtuous life, is blasted at once by a single inconsiderate action,—not perhaps proceeding from any very criminal motive, but from a momentary forgetfulness of what is due to public opinion! The common complaint, therefore, we hear of the prevalence of vice in the world, (I mean the opinion of good and candid men on the subject, for I speak not at present of the follies of the splenetic and censorious,) ought rather to be considered as proofs of the high standard of excellence pre-

sented to our view by the Author of our moral constitution, than as proofs of any peculiar degeneracy in the manners of our contemporaries.

3. It is of importance to remark how small is the number of individuals who draw the attention of the world by their crimes, when compared with the millions who pass their days in inoffensive obscurity. Of this it is scarcely necessary to produce any other proof than the fact which is commonly urged on the opposite side of the argument, the catalogue of crimes and of calamities which sully the history of past ages. For whence is the interest we take in historical reading, but from the singularity of the events it records, and from the contrast which its glaring colours present to the uniformity and repose of private life?

We may add to this observation, that even in those unhappy periods which have furnished the most ample materials to the historian, the storm has spent its rage in general on a comparatively small number of men placed in the more conspicuous stations of society by their birth, by their talents, by their ambition, or by an heroical sense of duty, while the unobserved multitude saw it pass over their head, or only heard its noise at a distance. Nor must we pronounce (among men called upon to the discharge of arduous trusts,) all those to have been unhappy who are commonly styled the unfortunate. The mind suits itself to the part it is destined to act; and, when great and worthy objects are before it, exults in those moments of

hazard and alarm, which, even while they threaten life and freedom, leave us in possession of every thing that constitutes the glory and the perfection of our nature.

In secret streams which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy :—
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.

The observations already made are I hope sufficient to obviate some of the strongest prejudices which are commonly entertained on this subject ; but the argument may be pushed much farther than I have yet done. I have spoken of the multitudes who pass through life in obscurity, as if their characters were merely inoffensive, and entitled them only to a negative praise ; whereas it may be reasonably doubted if it is not among them that the highest attainments of humanity have been made. In one half of our species, not destined by nature to come forward like our sex on the great theatre of human affairs, how meritorious in most instances, how exalted in many instances, is the general tenor of their conduct ! And when unusual combinations of circumstances have forced them into situations of difficulty and danger, what splendid examples of constancy and magnanimity have they left behind them ! Every person, too, who has turned his attention at all to the manners of the lower orders,

and who has studied with candour what Gray finely calls “ *The short and simple annals of the poor,*” must have met, among the many faults that may be fairly charged on their education and their circumstances, with numberless instances of integrity and of humanity which would have added lustre to the highest stations. There is not a more interesting circumstance mentioned in any biographical detail than the emotion which *Moliere* is said to have discovered when a common beggar, to whom he had hastily given a piece of gold instead of a small copper coin, returned and informed him of his mistake. “ *Où la vertu va-t-elle se nicher !*” An exclamation which, as *Bailly* observes, “ throws a stronger light on the character of the man who uttered it than all the anecdotes which have been collected of his wit and pleasantry.”

It is not, however, by *facts* alone that our conclusions on this subject ought to be limited ; for it is one of the amiable weaknesses often attendant upon worth (if it is indeed a weakness) to shun the observation of the world, and (as Pope alleges of his friend Mr Allan) to feel “ *an awkward shame*” when detected in acts of beneficence.

—— *Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.*

It is even proper and prudent in many instances to draw a veil over our *moral sensibilities*, were it for no other reason than this, that an assumed expression of them has been so often made subservient to the purposes of hypocrisy and affectation.

These imperfect hints, if they are allowed to be well founded, go far to justify a very pleasing idea of Mr Addison's, that "there are probably greater men who lie concealed among the species than those who come out and draw on themselves the eyes and admiration of mankind."—"If we suppose" (says he) "there are spirits or angels who look into the ways of men, how different are the notions which they entertain of us from those which we are apt to form of one another! We are dazzled with the splendour of titles; the ostentation of learning; the noise of victories. They, on the contrary, see the philosopher in the cottage, who possesses his soul in patience and thankfulness, under the pressure of what little souls call poverty and distress. They do not look for great men at the head of armies, or among the pomp of a court; but often find them out in shades and solitudes, in the private walks and bye-paths of life. The evening walk of a wise man is more illustrious in their sight than the march of a general at the head of a victorious army. A contemplation of God's works; a voluntary act of justice to our own detriment; tears that are shed in silence for the miseries of others; a private desire or resentment broken or subdued: In short, an unfeigned exercise of humility or any other virtue are such actions as are glorious in their sight, and denominate men great and respectable. The most famous among us are often looked upon with pity, with contempt, or with indignation,

“ while those who are most obscure among their
 “ own species are regarded with love, with appro-
 “ bation, and esteem.” *

In the foregoing reasonings I have not thought it necessary to enter into any nice metaphysical disquisitions with respect to the circumstances on which the moral merit and demerit of actions depend, but have expressed myself agreeably to the common language on the subject, though far from being strictly accurate. A distinction which I shall afterwards have occasion to illustrate between *absolute* and *relative* rectitude would enable me to *explain away* a much greater proportion of the apparent wickedness of our species. As I am unwilling, however, to anticipate at present that very important speculation, I shall confine myself to a simple statement of the distinction, and to a few very slight hints with respect to its application to the question before us.

An action is said to be absolutely right when it is in every respect suitable to the circumstances in which the agent is placed ; or, in other words, when it is such as, with perfectly good intentions, under the guidance of an enlightened and well informed understanding, he would have performed.

* Descartes seems to have been strongly impressed with these sentiments when he chose for his motto:—“ *Qui bene
 “ latuit, bene vixit.*” Such also is the evident import of the line in Horace :

Nec vixit male qui natus moriensque fefellit.

Horace, Epist. I.

An action is said to be relatively right when the intentions of the agent are sincerely good, whether his conduct be suitable to his circumstances or not.

According to these definitions it is evident that an action may be *right* in one sense and *wrong* in another ; and it is no less evident that it is the *relative* rectitude alone of an action which determines the moral desert of the agent in the sight of God and of his own conscience.

In computing, therefore, the moral demerit of mankind from their external actions, a large allowance ought to be made for those circumstances which may occasion deviations in their conduct from absolute rectitude, without affecting the sincerity of their good intentions. In particular, a large allowance ought to be made for erroneous speculative opinions ;—for false conceptions of facts ;—for prejudices inspired by the influence of prevailing manners ;—and for habits contracted insensibly in early infancy.

On each of these heads much might be offered ; but the variety of matter which crowds upon me renders it necessary to make a selection of such articles as are connected with the general argument. *One* circumstance alone now mentioned, *false conceptions of facts*, is sufficient to account for most of the cruel enmities in the world, both between nations and individuals. How often do we see this hostile disposition existing between two men, both of whom every impartial judge knows to be actuated by the worthiest motives, and of whom, perhaps, neither would be much to blame for his conduct, if his ad-

versary were such a man as he takes him to be ! In such instances we may have just cause to regret too great an irritability of temper, too suspicious and jealous a disposition ; or perhaps to wish that the parties possessed more good sense, and less narrow and prejudiced minds. But the more closely we study the circumstances of the case we shall be the more disposed to acquit them of that intentional injustice, and of that pure vindictive malice which they impute to each other, and which the world is likely, on a superficial view of the subject, to impute to both. If mankind were universally possessed of more enlarged and just understandings, everything else in their characters remaining as at present, little would be wanting to complete the order and harmony of society. And hence some have been led to imagine that vice and folly are only different names for the same thing. This seems to have been the opinion of Plato, according to whom “ virtue may be considered as a sort of science, and no man can see clearly and demonstratively what is right and what is wrong, and not act accordingly.” But this, as will afterwards appear, was an excess of refinement ; and it was with good reason Aristotle taught in opposition to it, “ That no conviction of the understanding is capable of getting the better of inveterate habits, and that good morals arise not from knowledge but from action.”

I cannot leave this head without again remarking the great importance, in forming our estimates of human character, of making suitable allowances

for prejudices inspired by the influence of prevailing manners, and for habits contracted in early infancy. It was justly remarked by Turgot, that bad laws are the great source of bad morals : And “ hence it was,” (says one of his biographers,) “ that, with an exemplary purity, and even severity in his own manners, he was so candid and indulgent in his opinions of others. Whatever their conduct might be, if it indicated no meanness, no falseness, no insensibility, no contempt for the rights of mankind, no tyranny, he was ever ready to pardon it ; for he saw in it the imperfections of social institutions, not the faults of the individuals ; and when these weaknesses or vices were joined with estimable qualities, or with real virtues, he respected the virtues as the work of the man himself, and regarded his failings with the pity due to misfortunes.”

So much with respect to the balance of *moral* evil and *moral* good in human life.

2d, With respect to the balance of *physical* evil and *physical* good the argument is still clearer, or rather it is so clear as to preclude the possibility of any discussion, provided only it be acknowledged that the general laws of nature are beneficent in their tendency, and that the inconveniences arising from them are only occasional. And surely upon this point there can be no hesitation. Indeed the *fact* is so indisputable and so obvious, that we may venture to rest the whole question at issue upon the impossibility of pointing out any one general phy-

sical law that could have been more wisely or beneficently ordered.

Among the occasional evils, too, that result from the physical laws by which this world is governed, no inconsiderable part may be traced to the obstacles which human institutions oppose to the order of things recommended by nature. How chimerical soever the speculations of philosophers concerning the perfection of legislation may be, they are useful at least in illustrating the wisdom and goodness of the Divine government. For this purpose I have often thought that it might form both an agreeable and instructive employment to follow out the supposition to its remote consequences, by considering the changes that in process of time would take place in the physical and in the moral condition of mankind, in consequence of the gradual influence of such institutions, as it is easy for a philosopher to conceive in theory. But in these disquisitions I cannot indulge myself at present.

It is of more consequence for us to remark a most beautiful and merciful remedy, (at least in part,) which is provided for the occasional evils that in every state of society must be inseparable in a greater or less degree, from a world like ours, governed by general laws, and inhabited by free agents. The remedy I allude to is the constitution of the human mind with respect to *habits*. So great is their influence, that there is hardly any situation to which the wishes of an individual may not be reconciled ; nay, where he will not find him-

self in time more comfortable than in those which are looked up to with envy by the bulk of mankind.

In judging of the fortunes of those who are placed in situations very different from our own, due allowances are seldom made for the effects of this principle. We conceive ourselves to be placed in the circumstances they occupy, and judge of their happiness or misery by what we should experience if we were to change our condition without any change in our habits. How dreadful, for example, in our apprehension, the lot of those who, to gratify the luxurious wants of their superiors, drag out a miserable existence (and for a scanty recompense) in the bowels of the earth ! And accordingly, there is none of the evils connected with polished life which Mr Burke has painted with greater force of eloquence in his ironical *Vindication of Natural Society*. Even here, however, the evil (which is unquestionably a real one, for it implies a vitiated taste with respect to our purest and most genuine pleasures,) is probably not a little magnified by our disposition to measure it by our own feelings. “ I have been assured,” (says Dr Beattie,) “ by a man of humanity and observation, “ the superintendant of an English colliery, that “ his people would rather work in their pits, three “ hundred feet under ground, than labour in a field “ of hay in the finest sunshine.” The same fact, or at least facts perfectly analogous, have been often stated to myself by persons who were able to

speak on the subject, from instances which fell under their own daily notice.

It is still more pleasing to remark the versatility of human nature, as it is exemplified among the inhabitants of the different regions of the globe; accommodating itself every where, (and apparently with the same facility,) to the physical circumstances of the climate where the lot of the individual has been cast.

“ Consider ” (says Seneca) “ all those nations
 “ with whom the tranquillity of our empire terminates ; I speak of the *Germans* and of the other
 “ wandering hordes in the neighbourhood of the
 “ Danube, oppressed with a perpetual winter, and
 “ with a lowering sky ; their scanty subsistence depends on a barren soil ; their shelter from rain is
 “ furnished by thatch and leaves ; they pass over
 “ their fens on the ice which gives them solidity ;
 “ they employ as articles of food the wild beasts
 “ which they have seized in the chase. Do these
 “ men appear to you to be unhappy ? No. *Habit*
 “ becomes to them a second *nature*, and what
 “ was at first imposed by necessity is now converted into a source of pleasure. The truth is, that
 “ the same external circumstances which you picture to yourself as the extreme of wretchedness,
 “ constitutes to numerous tribes of your fellow-creatures the whole circle of enjoyment which human life affords them. ‘ Hoc tibi calamitas videtur ? Tot gentium vita est.’ ” *

* De Provid.

“ The Laplander ” (says a writer in the *Amœnitates Academicæ*,) “ is continually occupied with
“ the care of his flock by night and day, not only
“ in the summer, but also in every season of the
“ year, and is obliged to wander up and down in
“ his immense woods during all the extremities of
“ a polar winter. The miserable herdsman must
“ sink under such revolutions of distress, did not
“ nature balance them with comforts able to support him under them. During his long night,
“ the frosty brilliancy of the stars, the reflection of
“ the snow, and the aurora borealis, with a thousand diversities of figure and radiation, supply the
“ absence of the sun ; his clothes, gloves, and shoes
“ are furnished him by the hide of the rein-deer ;
“ and the two latter being stuffed with the *Carex vesicaria* are a sufficient protection against the
“ utmost extremity of the cold. With his dog and
“ pipe of tobacco, his only luxury, he lives as contented and happy as the Tityrus of Virgil in the
“ fine climate and voluptuous shades of Naples.
“ With such ductility does nature yield to early
“ habits.”

I have quoted this passage, not only on account of the example it furnishes of the accommodating powers of the human frame, but as an illustration of the provision which nature often makes, in collateral physical circumstances, against the partial inconveniences resulting from her own general arrangements.

Nor is it only in infancy that the mind is susceptible of these habits. Numberless instances might

be quoted from the history of our species to show with what facility individuals, who had been accustomed to all the luxuries of life, have reconciled themselves to labour, hardship, and poverty, and even in some cases to a complete privation of all the comforts connected with civilized society.

Illustrations of these remarks may be collected by every one within the circle of his own experience ; and whoever takes the trouble to verify them in particular instances will find ample ground to admire the kind palliative which is thus provided against the evils of our present uncertain state, as well as the most satisfactory evidence that our common estimates of the happiness of life fall short greatly of the truth.

Having dwelt so long on the beneficent tendency of those laws which regulate the more essential interests of mankind, I must content myself with barely mentioning, before leaving this subject, the rich provision made for our enjoyment in the pleasures of the understanding, of the imagination, and of the heart. How delightful are the pursuits of science, how various, how inexhaustible ! How pure, how tranquil are the pleasures afforded by the fine arts ! How enlivening the charms of social intercourse ! How exquisite the endearments of affection ! How sublime the raptures of devotion ! The accommodation of our *sensitive* powers to the scene we occupy is still more wonderful : inasmuch as over and above the care which is taken for the preservation of our animal being, and the means provided for our intellectual and moral im-

provement, there appears to be a positive adaptation of our frame to the earth we inhabit ; an adaptation our Maker could destine for no other end but to multiply the sources of our enjoyment. Surely he might have contrived to enlighten the earth without displaying to our view the glories of the firmament. The day and the night might have regularly succeeded each other without our once having beheld the splendour of a morning sun, or the glow of an evening sky. The spring might have ministered to the fertility of summer and of autumn without scattering over the earth a profusion of flowers and blossoms, without refreshing the eye with the soft verdure of the fields, or filling the woods with joy and melody.

Nor content

With every food of life to nourish man,
Thou mad'st all nature beauty to His eye
And music to His ear !

“ The whole frame of the universe ” (says Epic-
tetus) “ is full of the goodness of God ; and to be
“ convinced of this important truth nothing more is
“ necessary than an attentive mind and a grateful
“ heart.”

It is however true, as Dr Paley has remarked in
by far the finest passage of his work on Moral
Philosophy, “ That the contemplation of *universal*
“ nature rather *bewilders* the mind than *affects* it.
“ There is always a *bright spot* in the prospect
“ upon which the eye rests ; a single example, per-
“ haps, by which each man finds himself more *con-*

“ *vinced* than by all others put together. *I* seem
“ for my own part to see the benevolence of the
“ Deity more clearly in the pleasures of very young
“ children than in any thing in the world. The
“ pleasures of grown persons may be reckoned
“ partly of their own procuring, especially if there
“ has been any industry, or contrivance, or pursuit
“ to come at them, or if they are founded, like mu-
“ sic and painting, upon any qualification of their
“ own acquiring. But the pleasures of a healthy
“ infant are so manifestly provided for by *another*,
“ and the benevolence of the provision is so unques-
“ tionable, that every child I see at its sport affords
“ to my mind a kind of sensible evidence of the
“ finger of God, and of the disposition which directs
“ it.

“ But the example which strikes each man most
“ strongly is the true example for him, and hardly
“ two minds hit upon the same ;—which shows the
“ abundance of such examples about us.”

Of the Evidences of the Moral Government of the Deity.

From the observations made on the foregoing subject it sufficiently appears that the constitution of the universe, and the general laws which regulate the course of human affairs, are wisely and beneficently contrived for the happiness of man ; that the sufferings which occur in human life fur-

nish no direct evidence of ill-intention in the Author and Governor of the world ; and that our own moral constitution (which we cannot help conceiving to have some conformity to the moral attributes of God) affords the strongest presumption that these sufferings are all subservient to beneficial purposes. But although *benevolence* and *goodness* be plainly an attribute of the Deity, it is not the *only* character in which he manifests himself to us in the course of his providence. There is another character perfectly consistent with this, and perhaps in fact a consequence of it, but which involves a different and very important consideration ;—that of the *righteous* Governor of the universe, whose object is not merely to communicate happiness, but to reward virtue and to punish vice.

From the order of the universe, and the combination of means we every where see employed to accomplish particular ends, we formerly concluded that it is the work of an intelligent mind. Now the same mode of reasoning leads us with equal certainty to draw other inferences concerning the Divine Nature and attributes. It was observed in the course of our argument with respect to the goodness of God, “ that all which we enjoy, and a great “ part of what we suffer, is put in our own power.” “ —That pleasures and pains are the consequences of “ our actions ; and that we are endued with capacities for foreseeing these consequences.” That one course of conduct leads to happiness and another to misery is a *fact* confirmed by the general

course of events ; and as the general course of events means to those who acknowledge the existence of God the same thing with the general plan of Divine Providence, this fact proves that God exercises a *government* over the world by means of rewards and punishments ; a government analogous to that which a master exercises over his servants, or a civil magistrate over his subjects. Nor is this all. From an examination of the course of human affairs it appears clearly, that, although happiness and misery are by no means distributed with an exact regard to the merits of individuals, yet they are so to so great a degree as may convince us that the *leading* object of Providence is to reward the good and to punish the evil. In other words, it appears that God exercises over the world not merely a government but a *moral* government ; not so perfect indeed as our moral constitution would lead us to desire, but sufficiently discernible in its *general tendency* to every attentive and well-disposed mind.

According to some philosophers and divines the sole ultimate end of the creation was the communication of happiness, and the sole moral attribute of the Deity is *pure benevolence*. It is not impossible that this may be the case ; nay, there are various considerations which make this not an improbable opinion. On this supposition we must conclude that the Deity bestowed on us our moral constitution as a *mean* towards a farther *end*,—the happiness of our own nature ;—and distributed rewards and

punishments only to secure this end more effectually. It is not impossible that there may be beings in the creation to whom he manifests himself alone under the character of benevolence. But all this is mere speculative supposition. The rules of our conduct are not to be derived from *possibilities* but from *facts*; and all that the fact authorizes us in this instance to conclude is, that God exercises over us a moral government by rewards and punishments, analogous to that which the civil magistrate establishes for preserving the order of society.*

Upon this subject two methods of arguing have been employed, which tend wonderfully to illustrate and confirm each other: the one founded on an examination of our own moral constitution; and the other on an examination of the ordinary course of Providence in the administration of human affairs.

* “ The annexing pleasure to some actions, and pain to others, in our power to do or to forbear, and giving notice of this appointment beforehand to those whom it concerns, is the proper formal notion of government. Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows upon our behaviour be owing to the Author of Nature acting upon us every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For if civil magistrates could make the sanction of their laws take place without interposing at all after they had passed them; without a trial and the formality of an executioner: if they were able to make their laws execute themselves, or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their government then as we are now, but in a much higher degree and more perfect manner.”—Butler’s Analogy, Chap. 2.

The former should I think precede the latter, in order to fortify the mind against those sceptical suspicions which the irregularities and disorders of the present state of things are apt to obtrude on a gloomy imagination. I have accordingly already hinted in part at this argument ; but for the sake of connection it may be proper in this place to recapitulate the following particulars.

In considering the evidences of benevolent design in the universe, it was before remarked, that, as our first ideas of the moral attributes of God are derived from our own moral perceptions, so it is from the consideration of these that the strongest proofs of his attributes arise.

It was also observed that the distinction between right and wrong is apprehended by the mind to be eternal and immutable, no less than the distinction between mathematical truth and falsehood ; and that of course to argue from our own moral judgments to the administration of the Deity, cannot be justly censured as a rash extension to the Divine Nature of suggestions resulting from the arbitrary constitution of our own minds.

The power we have of conceiving this distinction is one of the most remarkable of those which raise us above the brutes ; and the sense of obligation which it involves possesses a distinguished pre-eminence over all our other principles of action. To act in conformity to our sense of rectitude is plainly the highest excellence which our nature is capable of attaining ; nor can we avoid extending the same

rule of estimation to all intelligent beings whatever.

Besides these conclusions with respect to the Divine attributes, (which seem to be implied in our very perception of moral distinctions,) there are others perfectly agreeable to them, which continually force themselves on the mind in the exercise of our moral judgments, both with respect to our own conduct and that of other men. The reverence which we feel due to the admonitions of conscience,—the sense of merit and demerit which accompanies our good and bad actions,—the warm interest we take in the fortunes of the virtuous,—the indignation we feel at the occasional triumphs of successful villany,—all imply a secret conviction of the moral administration of the universe.

An examination, however, of the ordinary course of human affairs adds greatly to the force of these considerations,* and furnishes a proof from the fact,

* “ From the natural course of things vicious actions are to
“ a great degree actually punished as mischievous to society.
“ And beside the penalties actually inflicted in such cases, the
“ fears and apprehensions of it in case of a discovery operate
“ frequently as no inconsiderable punishment on those who
“ escape the vengeance of human laws. That those vices
“ which are destructive of society should be punished by the
“ magistrate arises from the very existence of society. And
“ as the political union is the necessary result of the nature of
“ man, the penalties by which it restrains crimes may be con-
“ sidered as a part of the order of Providence, though acting
“ by the instrumentality of man. Nor is it a valid objection
“ to this reasoning that good actions, and such as are really

that, notwithstanding the seemingly promiscuous distribution of happiness and misery in this life,

“ beneficial to the public, are sometimes punished, as in the
 “ case of unjust persecution ; and that vicious actions are frequently rewarded ; for, in the first place, when this occurs it
 “ is matter of accident, and does not arise necessarily from the
 “ established order of things, as the penalties annexed to certain vices result necessarily from the constitution of society ;
 “ and, secondly, when good actions are punished, and bad
 “ ones rewarded, it is owing to some accidental misconception
 “ of their tendency, the former being supposed erroneously to
 “ be hurtful and the latter beneficial to the public. The general
 “ proposition, therefore, holds without any thing that can
 “ be opposed to it on the other hand, that the punishment of
 “ certain vices results necessarily from the circumstances in
 “ which Providence has placed mankind.

“ In the natural course of things virtue *as such* is actually
 “ rewarded, and vice *as such* punished. Besides the agreeable
 “ and disagreeable effects of virtue and vice on men’s own
 “ minds, the course of the world turns in some measure upon
 “ the approbation and disapprobation of them *as such* in others.
 “ The sense of well and ill doing, the presages of conscience,
 “ the love of good characters and dislike of bad ones, honour,
 “ shame, resentment, gratitude,—all these, considered in themselves and in their effects, afford manifest real instances of
 “ virtue *as such* naturally favoured, and of vice *as such* dis-
 “ countenanced, more or less, in the daily course of human
 “ life. That God has given us a moral constitution may be
 “ urged most justly as a proof of our being under his moral
 “ government. But that he has placed us in a condition which
 “ gives this nature scope to operate, and in which it does
 “ unavoidably operate, by influencing mankind so to act as to
 “ favour and reward virtue and punish vice ; this is not the
 “ same, but an additional proof of his moral government, for
 “ it is an instance of it. The first is a proof that he will
 “ finally favour and support virtue effectually. The second is

the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice are the great objects of all the general laws by which the world is governed. The disorders in the meantime which, in such a world as ours, cannot fail to arise in particular instances, when they are compared with our natural sense of good and of ill desert, afford a presumption that in a future state the moral government which we see begun here will be carried into complete execution.

“ an example of his favouring and supporting it at present in some degree.

“ Besides the actual *effects* of virtue and vice in this life, there is something very remarkable in their necessary *tendencies*; and in so far as these tendencies lie open to our observation, they afford a proof from the fact of the moral government under which we are placed. The actual consequences of virtue and of vice are indeed very conspicuous; but they bear little proportion to what they would produce if their *tendencies* were not restrained by accidental circumstances. Good and bad men, for example, would be much more rewarded and punished as such, were it not that justice is often artificially eluded, that characters are not known, and many who would thus favour virtue and discourage vice are hindered from doing so from accidental causes.”

The foregoing note is little more than an abridgement of some observations of Butler's in his chapter *On the Moral Government of God*.—See Butler's *Analogy*, p. 73. Third Edition.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES
OF NATURAL RELIGION.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

OF A FUTURE STATE.

THE consideration of the Divine attributes naturally leads our thoughts to the future prospects of man, and to the sequel of that plan of moral government which we see plainly begun here, and which our own moral constitution, joined to our conclusions concerning the perfections of God, afford us the strongest intimations will be more completely unfolded in some subsequent stage of our being. The doctrine indeed of a future state seems to be in a great measure implied in every system of religious belief; for why were we rendered capable of elevating our thoughts to the Deity, if all our hopes are to terminate here? Or why were we furnished with powers which range through the infinity of space and time, if our lot is to be the same with that of the beasts which perish? But although the doctrine of a future state be implied in

every scheme of religion, the truths of religion are not necessarily implied in the doctrine of a future state. Even absolute atheism does not destroy all the arguments for the immortality of the soul. Whether it be owing to an overruling intelligence or not, it is a *fact* which no man can deny, that there are general laws which regulate the course of human affairs, and that even in this world we see manifest indications of a connection between virtue and happiness. Why may not *necessity* continue that existence it at first gave birth to; and why may not the connection between virtue and happiness subsist for ever?

SECTION I.

Of the Argument for a Future State derived from the Nature of Mind.

In collecting the various presumptions which the light of nature affords for a future state, too much stress has commonly been laid on the soul's immateriality.* After having proved, or attempted to prove,

* On this point I quite agree with Locke. "All the great ends of morality and religion are well enough secured without philosophical proof of the soul's immateriality; since it is evident, that He who made us at the beginning to subsist here, sensible intelligent beings, and for several years continued us in such a state, can restore us to the like state of sensibility in another world, and make us capable there to receive the retribution he has designed to men, accord-

that it has no quality in common with matter ; in particular, that it is not extended or divisible, the advocates for this opinion have concluded, with all the confidence of demonstration, that what is not compounded nor made up of parts cannot be dissolved, and, therefore, that the human soul is essentially and necessarily immortal. “ Et cum simplex natura animi esset, neque haberet in se quidquam admistum dispar sui, atque dissimile, non posse eum dividi ; quod si non possit, non posse interire.” *

But this argument, I am afraid, supposing it were logical, proves too much ; for it concludes as strongly against the possibility of the soul's being *created* as *dissolved* ; and accordingly, we find that almost all the ancient philosophers who believed in a future state maintained also the doctrine of the soul's pre-existence. Nay, some of them seem to have considered the latter point as still better established than the former. In the *Phedon* of Plato, in which Socrates is introduced as stating to his friends, immediately before his execution, the proofs of a future state, Cebes, who is one of the speakers in the dialogue, admits that he has been successful in establishing the doctrine of the soul's pre-existence, but insists on farther proofs of the possibility of its surviving the body.

“ ing to their doings in this life,” &c. &c.—See the Chapter of his Essay on the Extent of Human Knowledge.—Locke's Works, Vol. II. p. 332.

* Cicero De Senectute, xxi.

When we consider, however, with attention the argument from the soul's immateriality in favour of its immortality, it appears to be by no means conclusive ; for although we have the strongest evidence (as I shall afterwards show) that there is a thinking and sentient principle within us essentially distinct from matter, yet we have no direct evidence from the fact, of the possibility of this principle exercising its various faculties and powers in a separate state from the body. On the contrary, the union between the two, while it subsists, is evidently of the most intimate nature. We have reason to believe that, in the exercise of all the intellectual powers, the soul *acts* somehow or other on the body ; for we find that when we have long been exerting any particular faculty we are conscious of fatigue, and are relieved by giving the mind some other species of employment. We know, too, from what happens in consequence of intoxication, madness, and other diseases, that a certain condition of the body is necessary to the intellectual operations : And the same thing appears from the gradual decay of the faculties as we approach to old age. This last fact is indeed not universal. We meet with some old men who retain their faculties unimpaired to the last ; and others cut off in the vigour of life, who have displayed the usual force of their understandings under the pressure of some disease which was in a few moments to terminate their existence. But surely the more common fact is, that the body and mind seem to decay together ; and the few exceptions that

occur only prove that there are some diseases fatal to life which do not injure those parts of the body with which the intellectual operations are more immediately connected.

I would not be understood by these observations to give the smallest countenance to the scheme of materialism ; a scheme which is not only dangerous, but which I have shown, in the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, to be absurd and incomprehensible. Indeed it is self-evident, that, as our notions of body and mind are merely relative, as we know the one only by its sensible qualities, and the other by the operations of which we are conscious, to say of mind that it is not material, is to affirm a proposition, the truth of which is involved in the only conceptions of matter and mind that we are capable of forming.

The doubts that have been suggested with respect to the essential distinction between matter and mind derive all their plausibility from the habits of inattention we acquire in early infancy to our mental operations. It was plainly the intention of nature that our thoughts should be habitually directed to things external ; and accordingly the bulk of mankind are not only disposed to overlook the mental phenomena, but are incapable of that degree of reflection which is necessary for their examination. Hence it is, that, when we begin to study our own internal constitution, we find the facts it presents to us so very intimately associated in our conceptions with the qualities of matter, that it

is impossible for us to draw distinctly and steadily the line between them ; and that when mind and matter are concerned in the same event, mind is either entirely overlooked, or is regarded only as an accessory to matter, and as dependent upon it for its existence. The tendency which all men have to refer the sensation of *colour* to the objects by which it is excited may serve to illustrate the manner in which the qualities of mind and body come to be blended in our apprehensions. We may add, as a farther illustration of the same thing, the reference which, in the case of physical events, we naturally make to matter, of *power*, or *force*, or *energy*, which is an attribute of mind, and can exist in mind only. The same observation might be exemplified in numberless other instances, of which I shall at present mention only one,—the confusion between the terms *sensation* and *perception* which has produced the ideal theory. In general, the bulk of mankind are so engrossed with external objects, that they overlook entirely their own mental operations, and even lose the capacity of attending to them ; insomuch that the mind is compared by Locke to the eye, which sees every object around us, but cannot see itself. This tendency of our nature is to be counteracted only by habits of reflection, of which very few men are capable, and which, unless we are led by natural curiosity or by accident, to cultivate them in very early youth, are I believe perfectly unattainable. Such habits are however absolutely necessary to enable us to make

any solid progress in the Philosophy of Mind, and to prevent us from being misled by the analogy of matter in explaining the intellectual phenomena. In proportion, too, as they become familiar to us, they lead us insensibly, without any long process of reasoning, to draw the line between the operations of mind and the qualities of matter; and to perceive, that of all the truths we know the existence of mind is the most certain. Even the system of Berkeley, concerning the non-existence of matter, is far more conceivable than that matter is the *only* substance existing in the universe.

For the errors which the vulgar are apt to commit on these subjects, the habits of inattention already mentioned afford perhaps more than a sufficient apology. But it is painful to remark in philosophers of eminence, who seem to have, in a considerable degree, surmounted these habits, a disposition to conform themselves to the grossest apprehensions of the multitude, rather than give any countenance to the sublime and elevating doctrine of the immateriality of the soul. Thus Mr Hume, who has so accurately stated in the case of the secondary qualities of matter, the absurdity of referring to body what can only exist in a sentient being, has yet not scrupled to speak of "that little agitation of the brain which we call thought." Surely if it be absurd to speak of matter being *cold* or *hot*, *blue* or *green*, it is at least as great an absurdity to speak of matter, *thinking*, *remembering*, or *reasoning*.

If these remarks be well founded, the prejudices which give support to the scheme of materialism are not likely to be cured by any metaphysical reasonings, how clear or conclusive soever, so long as the judgment continues to be warped by such obstinate associations as have just been mentioned. A habit of reflecting on the laws of thought, as they are to be collected from our own consciousness, together with a habit of resisting those illusions of the fancy which lead superficial inquirers to substitute analogies for facts, will gradually enable us to make the phenomena of matter and those of mind distinct objects of attention, and as soon as this happens, the absurdity of materialism must appear intuitively obvious.

It affords, I think, some confirmation of these reasonings, that all the attempts which have been made to explain any of the operations of mind by the analogy of material phenomena have involved their authors in absurdities and contradictions ; and that it is only since the time when Descartes drew the line distinctly between these two objects of our knowledge * that any considerable progress in the

* “ Les Méditations Métaphysiques de Descartes parurent
 “ en 1641. C’étoit de tous ses ouvrages, celui qu’il estimoit le
 “ plus. Ce qui caractérise surtout cet ouvrage, c’est qu’il con-
 “ tient sa fameuse démonstration de Dieu, démonstration si
 “ répétée depuis, adoptée par les uns et rejetée par les autres ;
 “ et qu’il est le premier où la distinction de l’esprit et de la ma-
 “ tière soit parfaitement développée : Car avant Descartes on
 “ n’avoit encore bien approfondi les preuves philosophiques de

Philosophy of Mind has been made. On the other hand, every step which has been gained in this study has undermined some of the prejudices from which materialism derives its support. The old theory, for example, with respect to perception, was extremely favourable to the supposition of the soul's materiality. Philosophers apprehended that the qualities of external objects were perceived by means of images of these qualities, transmitted from the object to the mind through the medium of the senses, and that there was no idea in the understanding which was not originally conveyed to it by this channel. Thus the mind was conceived to receive all its ideas from without, and to be originally nothing more than a repository for receiving the images or *species* of surrounding objects; or, as the language of these philosophers seems at other times rather to imply, a tablet fitted to receive passively those impressions or stamps which are made on it by the various qualities of matter. These *images*, or these *impressions*, furnished the whole materials of its knowledge, which it might analyze or compound, but beyond which it could create nothing.

When, however, we lay aside theory, and attend to the fact, it appears, with unquestionable evidence, that our perception of external objects is obtained by the intervention of sensations, to which the qualities of these objects bear no more resemblance

“la spiritualité de l'âme.”—Eloge de Descartes, par M. Thomas, Note 20.

than the words of a language do to the objects they denote ; and that the only difference which we are able to discover between the two cases is, that in the one the connection between the sign and the thing signified is established by nature, and in the other by custom alone. By the constitution of our nature indeed we are disposed in most instances to overlook the sign, and to attend to the thing signified ; in consequence of which the qualities of matter engross our attention much more, and are much more familiar to us than the sensations of which we are conscious, and by the intervention of which our perceptions of these qualities are obtained. It is easy, however, to conceive that the mind might have been so formed as to possess all the sensations which belong to it in its present state, without having had any perception of the qualities of external objects. And it may be even affirmed that it might have arrived at the exercise of most of its intellectual faculties, without having had any notion of the existence of a material world.

For the illustration of this proposition I must refer to the *Philosophy of the Human Mind* ; * and whoever considers it with attention, and reflects on the consequences to which it leads, will (if I am not much deceived,) be fully sensible of the absurdity which the scheme of materialism involves.

It is not, however, on an examination of the human intellect alone that I would rest the decision of this question. Besides the evidences for

* Vol. I. Chap. i. Sect. 4.

the existence of mind which our own consciousness affords, and those which are exhibited by other men and by the lower animals, there are many presented to us by every part of the material world. We are so constituted that every change we see in it suggests to us the notion of an efficient cause ; and every combination of means conspiring to an end suggests to us the notion of intelligence. And accordingly the various changes which take place in nature, and the order and beauty of the universe, have in every age been regarded as the effects of power and wisdom ; that is, of the operation of mind. In the material world, therefore, as well as in the case of animated nature, we are led to conceive body as a passive subject, and mind as the moving and governing agent. And it deserves attention, that in the former class of phenomena mind appears to move and arrange the parts of matter without being united with it, as in the case of animal life.

There are various circumstances which render it highly probable that the union between soul and body which takes place in our present state, so far from being essential to the exercise of our powers and faculties, was intended to limit the sphere of our information ; and to prevent us from acquiring, in this early stage of our being, too clear a view of the constitution and government of the universe. Indeed, when we reflect on the difference between the operations of mind and the qualities of matter, it appears much more wonderful that they should

be so intimately united as we find them actually to be, than to suppose that the former may exist in a conscious and intelligent state when separated from the latter.*

It may perhaps contribute somewhat to reconcile the imagination to this doctrine when we consider that the substance of which the body is composed is perpetually changing, so that during the life of a man all the particles which go to the combination must have frequently undergone a complete renovation ; and yet during all this time we retain a distinct consciousness of our personal identity. This fact is surely not a little favourable to the supposition of mind being a principle essentially distinct from matter, and capable of existing when its connection with the body is dissolved. I do not say that it furnishes any logical argument on the subject distinct from that already stated ; but in the present inquiry *arguments* are less necessary than *illustrations to aid our apprehensions*, in combating those associations which in our early years lead us so to blend the qualities of body and mind, that we find it difficult ever after to make them separate objects of attention. An old English writer (Mr John Smith of Cambridge) has placed the remark now hinted at in some new and striking points of view.

* “ Mihi quidem, naturam animi intuenti, multo difficilior occurrit cogitatio multoque obscurior, qualis animus in corpore sit, tamquam alienæ domui, quam qualis, cum exierit et in liberum cælum quasi domum suam, venerit.”—Tusc. Disp. Liber i. C. 22.

“ If our souls were nothing else than a complex
 “ of fluid atoms, how should we be continually ro-
 “ ving and sliding from ourselves, and soon forget
 “ what we once were? The *new matter* that would
 “ come in to fill up that vacuity which the *old* had
 “ made by its departure would never know what
 “ the old were, nor what that should be that would
 “ succeed that. That new pilgrim and stranger-like
 “ soul would always be ignorant of what the other
 “ before it knew, and we should be wholly some
 “ other bulk of being than we were before, as
 “ Plotinus hath excellently observed, Enn. iv. l. 7,
 “ C. 5. It was a famous speech of wise Heraclitus,
 “ εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν δις οὐκ ἂν ἐμβῶμεν,—‘ A man
 “ ‘ cannot enter twice into the same river;’ by which
 “ he was wont symbolically to express the con-
 “ stant flux of matter, which is the most unstable
 “ thing that may be. And if Epicurus in his Phi-
 “ losophy could free this heap of refined atoms,
 “ which it makes the soul to be, from this inconstant
 “ and flitting nature, and teach us how it could be
 “ μόνιμον τι, ‘ some stable and immutable thing,’ al-
 “ ways resting entire while it is in the body; though
 “ we should thank him for such a goodly conceit as
 “ this is, yet we would make no doubt but it might as
 “ well be able to preserve itself from dissolution and
 “ dissipation *out* of this gross body as *in* it; seeing
 “ it is no more secured from the constant impulses
 “ of that more gross matter which is restlessly mov-
 “ ing up and down *in* the body than it is *out* of it;

“ and yet for all that, we should take the leave to ask
 “ Tully’s question with his sober disdain, *Quid ob-*
 “ *secro, terrane tibi aut hoc nebuloso et caliginoso*
 “ *cœno aut sata aut concreta videtur tanta vis memo-*
 “ *riæ?* Such a jewel as this is too precious to be
 “ found in a dunghill. Mere matter could never thus
 “ stretch forth its feeble force and spread itself over
 “ all its own former pre-existences. We may as well
 “ suppose this dull and heavy earth we tread upon
 “ to know how long it hath dwelt in this part of
 “ the universe that now it doth, and what variety
 “ of creatures have in all past ages sprung forth
 “ from it, and all those occurrences and events
 “ which have all this time happened upon it.” *

* Select Discourses by John Smith of Cambridge, pp. 83, 84.

I have, in an other work, made some remarks on the Argument against the Immateriality of the Soul which Priestley and others have founded on the common apprehensions of mankind, as manifested in their modes of speaking on the subject.—*Spiritus, πνευμα, Ghost, &c.* (Phil. Essays, Ess. V. ch. ii.)

The same metaphorical language, with respect to the nature of mind, occurs in one of the most classical didactic poems in our language.

There is they say, (and I believe there is,)
 A spark within us of th’ immortal fire,
 That animates and moulds the grosser frame,
 And when the body sinks escapes to Heaven,
 Its native seat, and mixes with the gods.
 Meanwhile this heavenly *particle* pervades
 The mortal elements, &c. &c.

Art of Preserving Health.

I have quoted these lines not on account of their own merit,

What, then, shall we say of the effects of disease and old age on the mind? That they are convincing

but as an introduction to what appears to me to be a very exceptionable remark on them, by a writer for whose taste and critical judgment I entertain a high respect. "The theory" (he observes) "of the union of a spiritual principle with the gross corporeal substance, is that which Armstrong adopts as the basis of his reasonings. He evidently confounds, however, (*as all writers on this system do,*) matter of great subtlety with what is not matter—or spirit."

See an ingenious and elegant Essay prefixed to the edition of Armstrong's Poems, published by J. Aikin, M. D.

If this observation had been confined to the passage of Armstrong here referred to, I should not have been disposed to object to it, as I think it completely justified by some expressions which occur in the next paragraph, particularly by what is there said of the various functions which are performed

"By subtle fluids pour'd through subtle tubes;"

Of some of which fluids we are afterwards told that they

"Are lost in thinking, and dissolve in air."

It is the parenthetical clause alone (distinguished by italics) which has led me to point out to my readers the foregoing criticism of Dr Aikin's, and in this clause I must be allowed to say, that the greatest injustice is inadvertently done to many of our best philosophers, both ancient and modern.

To this note I shall only add the following query:—

Whence has arisen that disposition which materialists of every description have shown to subtilize, as far as was possible for the imagination to do so, the atoms which they conceived to produce by their organization the phenomena of thought?

"Quintessence d'atôme, extrait de la lumière!"

Might not a plausible argument against their opinion be deduced from this *acknowledged fact*, by employing a mode of reasoning somewhat analogous to the *method of exhaustions* among the Greek geometricians?

proofs of its intimate union with the body, and of the dependence of our intellectual operations at present on our corporeal organs, cannot be disputed. But they surely do not amount to a proof that the soul is necessarily extinguished when the body is dissolved. “Suppose a person” (says Cicero) “to have been educated from his infancy in a chamber, where he enjoyed no opportunity of seeing external objects, but through a small chink in the window-shutter, would he not be apt to consider this chink as essential to his vision, and would it not be difficult to persuade him that his prospects would be enlarged by demolishing the walls of his prison?” Admitting that this analogy is founded merely on fancy, yet, if it be granted that there is no absurdity in the supposition, it furnishes a sufficient answer to all the reasonings which have been stated against the possibility of the soul’s separate existence from the consideration of its present union with the body.

In order to be completely sensible of the force of this observation, it is necessary to attend to the distinction between the mind and its organs of sense ; or, in other words, between the percipient and his organs of perception ; a distinction for the illustration of which I shall again avail myself of the language of Cicero. “Nos enim ne nunc quidem oculis cernimus ea quæ videmus ; neque enim est ullus sensus in corpore, sed, ut non solum physici docent, verum etiam medici, qui ista aperta et patefacta viderunt, viæ quasi quædam sunt ad ocu-

“ los, ad aures, ad nares à sede animi perforatæ.
 “ Itaque sæpe aut cogitatione aut aliqua vi morbi
 “ impediti, apertis atque integris et oculis, et auri-
 “ bus, nec videmus, nec audimus : ut facile intelligi
 “ possit animum et videre et audire, non eas partes,
 “ quæ quasi fenestræ sunt animi : quibus tamen
 “ sentire nihil queat mens, nisi id agat et adsit.
 “ Quid, quod eadem mente res dissimillimas com-
 “ prehendimus, ut colorem, saporem, calorem, odo-
 “ rem, sonum ? quæ numquam quinque nuntiis ani-
 “ mus cognosceret, nisi ad eum omnia referrentur,
 “ et is omnium judex solus esset. Atque ea pro-
 “ fectò tum multo puriora et dilucidiora cernen-
 “ tur, cum, quo natura fert, liber animus pervenerit.
 “ Nam nunc quidem, quamquam foramina illa, quæ
 “ patent ad animum a corpore, callidissimo artificio
 “ natura fabricata est, tamen terrenis concretisque
 “ corporibus sunt intersepta quodammodo : cum au-
 “ tem nihil erit præter animum, nulla res objecta
 “ impediet, quo minus percipiat, quale quidque
 “ sit.” *

In support of the foregoing conclusions many

* Tuscul. Disputationum, Liber Primus, c. xx.

The same idea which runs through this passage has been adopted and placed in some new lights by an old English poet, whose works are less known than they deserve to be, Sir John Davies, Attorney-General in Ireland under the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

“ So though the clouds eclipse the sun’s fair light,
 “ Yet from his face they do not take one beam ;
 “ So have our eyes their perfect power of sight
 “ Even when they look into a troubled stream.

strong arguments might be derived from an accurate examination and analysis of our ideas of matter and its qualities ; but as such speculations would necessarily engage me in a discussion of some principles, about which philosophers are not as yet perfectly agreed, I shall content myself with barely hinting at my ideas on this subject, without aiming at a complete illustration of the argument.

It is well known to those who are at all acquainted with the present state of natural philosophy, that a new theory with respect to matter was proposed not many years ago by the late celebrated Father Boscovich. According to this theory we are taught that the quality of impenetrability, which commonly enters into our idea of matter, does not belong to it, and that the qualities of hardness and softness

“ Then these defects in sense’s organs be,
 “ Not in the soul, nor in her working might ;
 “ She cannot lose her perfect power to see,
 “ Though mists and clouds do choke her window-light.

“ These imperfections, then, we must impute
 “ Not to the agent, but the instrument :
 “ We must not blame Apollo but his lute,
 “ If false accords from her false strings be sent.

“ As a good harper stricken far in years,
 “ Into whose cunning hands the gout doth fall,
 “ All his old crotchets in his brain he bears,
 “ But on his harp plays ill, or not at all.

* * *

“ But if Apollo takes his gout away,
 “ That he his nimble fingers may apply,
 “ Apollo’s self will envy at his play,
 “ And all the world applaud his minstrelsy.”

have always a reference to the force we employ in compressing bodies. As what is hard to an infant may be soft to a man, so what is hard when compared with human strength may be soft when compared with that of more powerful beings. When we have exerted all our force in attempting to compress a body, and find that we cannot diminish its volume any farther, the resistance it opposes to our efforts is not an absolute incompressibility, but an incompressibility relative to our strength. With a greater force it might be reduced within a volume still smaller, and with a force sufficiently great its volume might be made to vanish into nothing. Matter, therefore, it is concluded, is nothing but a power of resistance, and there is no such thing in nature as atoms perfectly hard and absolutely impenetrable.

With respect to this theory of Boscovich's I shall not venture to give any decided opinion. That it is attended with some difficulties must I think be granted by its most zealous advocates ; but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that he has been successful in establishing three propositions. *1st*, That the supposition of impenetrable particles is liable to strong, if not to insurmountable objections. *2dly*, That there are no facts which afford any direct evidence of it. And, *3dly*, That there are some striking facts which favour the opposite hypothesis. In proof of the last proposition it is sufficient to appeal to those experiments which have led modern philosophers to conclude, that all bodies exert a re-

pulsive power, extending to a certain distance from their surfaces, and that the common effects which are attributed to contact and collision are produced by this repulsion. We know that when a convex lens is laid on a plane glass a very great compressive power may be employed without producing actual contact ; and we also know, from some electrical phenomena, that the links of a metallic chain are not in contact with each other, even when the chain is stretched with very heavy weights. The same phenomena, therefore, *may be* produced by repulsion which we commonly ascribe to contact ; and if so, why not attribute to the same cause *all* effects of the same nature ? Accordingly, Boscovich denies the existence of impenetrable particles, and supposes matter to be composed of unextended elements (mere mathematical points) exerting powers of repulsion, so as to produce the same appearances which would take place on the common supposition. On this doctrine with respect to matter, or at least on a doctrine extremely similar to it, Dr Priestley has founded his reasonings against the immateriality of the soul ; and it is from these premises he has attempted to show that the extinction of the sentient and thinking principle must necessarily result from the dissolution of the body.

But it appears to me, that, if Boscovich's theory be admitted, instead of establishing materialism, it destroys completely the foundation of that system. It is evident that, according to Boscovich's idea, all that we know of the impenetrability of matter

amounts to this, that there exist certain repulsive forces which counteract those compressing forces we ourselves exert. Now, if this is the case, we must ascribe these forces to something analogous to that of which we are conscious in ourselves. In other words, we must ascribe them to the agency of mind ; for active force is an attribute of mind just as much as sensation or thought. Matter, therefore, is not a thing which has a separate and independent existence, but an *effect* which is continued by the constant agency of Divine Power.

I formerly endeavoured to show that, in the phenomena of gravitation, and in general in the changes which take place in the state of the material universe, the incessant agency of the Deity, or of some subordinate mind, is indispensably necessary to account for the effects. And this seems now to be the opinion of all the best philosophers. But, according to Boscovich's theory, the constant agency of the Deity is carried much farther than any philosopher has hitherto apprehended ; for it appears to be necessary to account for even the solidity or impenetrability of matter ; that quality which is generally considered as constituting the very essence of matter, or at least to be inseparable from the idea of it. The ancient philosophers, even those of them who were theists, believed matter to be eternal as well as mind. Modern theists in general suppose matter to have been originally created by the Deity, but to have derived from him a separate and independent existence. But, according to Bosco-

vich's theory, the *existence* of matter is a constant effect of Divine Power ; and, if this power were a moment withheld, the whole material universe would vanish into nothing. So far, therefore, from leading to materialism (in the common sense of that word) Boscovich's theory, if accurately conceived and followed out to its necessary consequences, represents mind as the only independent existence we know, and matter as a mere *effect* dependent on its operation.

What then shall we suppose happens at death ? Our connection with that system of appearances called the material world plainly ceases ; but surely no presumption arises from this against the permanent existence of our minds. On the contrary, the presumption is strongly in favour of their permanent existence, and that death only lifts up the veil which conceals from our mortal eyes the invisible world. Death does not extinguish mind, and leave the material world existing as before. On the contrary, death annihilates the material universe to our senses, and prepares our minds for some new and unknown state of being.* The phi-

* This, as far as I am able to conjecture from my recollection of his conversation, was the opinion of my late amiable and excellent friend Dr James Hutton,—so ingenious and original in his writings as a geologist and natural philosopher, but often so dark and even incomprehensible as a metaphysician. It is well known that Dr Hutton had adopted a theory with respect to matter approaching very nearly to those of Boscovich and Priestley.

losophers who believed matter to be uncreated and eternal might be pardoned for sometimes running into the absurdity of supposing that it is the only existence in nature, and that the phenomena of which we are conscious result from bodily organization. But *first* to maintain that matter is merely a system of forces, and *then* to conclude that there is no such thing as mind, is such a tissue of inconsistency and contradiction, or rather such a pitiful juggle upon words, as is scarcely to be paralleled in the history of philosophy.

I have already declined giving any opinion for or against Boscovich's theory, and shall only remark at present, as a circumstance that furnishes a most pleasing field of speculation to the human mind, that, on questions of so interesting a nature as those which relate to the existence of a Deity and a future state, the kind Author of our being has not left our belief to depend on the precarious issue of philosophical controversies; for whatever theory we adopt, whether right or wrong, we are unavoidably led to the same conclusions; and frequently those very hypotheses that have been advanced to unhinge the common opinions of mankind have furnished new arguments in support of the principles they were intended to subvert.

After what has been already said, it is scarcely necessary for me to add, that the scope of the foregoing observations is to establish the probability, not only of the future existence of the soul, but of its conscious identity and individuality. Indeed,

unless this be granted, the question about the distinct natures of mind and of body, and the possibility of the former surviving the dissolution of the latter, seems to me of no consequence whatever.

It is, however, not a little extraordinary that a considerable number of philosophers, after admitting the distinction between mind and matter, have yet supposed the soul to be a *ray* or an *emanation* from the Deity, which at the dissolution of the body will be again absorbed into the great source from which it proceeded. This seems to have been the opinion of many of the ancient stoics ; and a similar idea has been adopted by some philosophers in modern times, who have compared the soul, when joined to the body, to a small portion of the sea inclosed in a vial ; and when separated from it, to the same water, confounded and intermixed by the breaking of the vial which contained it, with the ocean, from whence it was at first taken.

But this doctrine, though supported by great names, is not more pernicious in its tendency than it is absurd and unintelligible. The distinct consciousness we retain of our personal identity, under all the various changes which the body suffers during our progress through life, is the most important fact in the history of the human mind, and it is that which affords the strongest of all presages of its future destination. To speak of different minds being blended together and lost in one general mass of being, is to employ a form of words to which it is absolutely impossible to an-

nex a meaning, and is one of the many **absurdities** into which ingenious men have been led, by indulging their fancy in groundless analogies between intellectual and material phenomena. It is in truth a language which is infinitely more unphilosophical than that employed by the materialists, who suppose thinking to result from bodily organization, and the whole man to perish at the moment of death. In their practical tendency I can see no difference between the two opinions.

I have now stated all that I think it necessary for me to offer in illustration of the argument for a future state derived from the nature of mind,—an argument which, although it seems to me to be highly favourable to our future hopes, I have avoided to urge with the confidence of demonstrative certainty. In entering upon the subject, I observed that those writers who, from the immateriality of the soul, conclude that it is physically and necessarily immortal, have pushed the conclusion too far; and that the proper use of the speculation concerning the nature of mind is not to establish the *truth* of the point in question, but to refute the objections which have been urged against the possibility of the proposition. Although our knowledge of the nature of mind may not be sufficient to afford us any positive argument on the subject, yet, if it can be shown that the dissolution of the body does not necessarily infer the extinction of the soul; and still more, if it can be shown that the presumption is in favour of the contrary supposition, the moral proofs

of a future retribution will meet with a more easy reception, when the doctrine is freed from the metaphysical difficulties which it has been apprehended to involve. It is in this moderate form that the argument from the light of nature is stated by Butler; and the considerations he mentions prove fully, not only that no presumption against a future state can be collected from the dissolution of the body, but that the contrary supposition is more agreeable to the general analogy of nature. For establishing this conclusion important hints may be collected from Clarke's Letters to Dodwell, where, although the reasoning may be insufficient to demonstrate the proposition which the author had in view, it affords at least a satisfactory refutation of all those cavils against a future state which sceptics have founded on the supposition of our thinking powers being the result of our bodily organization.

Before proceeding to examine the moral evidences for a future state, it may be of use to remark, in farther confirmation of some of the foregoing reasonings, that there is nothing *absurd* in the supposition, nor contrary to the analogy of those laws by which we know the universe to be governed. There is nothing even contrary to the analogy of what we have already experienced in the former history of our own being. The change which takes place in the state of the infant at the moment of its birth may perhaps be analogous to the change we are destined to undergo at the moment of our dissolution. And it is probable, that, if an infant in

the womb were capable of reflecting on its condition, it would be as apprehensive of the consequences of birth as we are of those of death. Some beautiful illustrations of this idea are to be found in Bishop Butler, and indeed in various other authors, both ancient and modern. It is touched upon with a pathetic simplicity by Sir John Davies, in the poem which I already quoted; and Marcus Antoninus avails himself of it as an argument to reconcile us to the appointed order of nature in the termination of human life.

“ It becomes a wise man neither to be inconsiderate, impetuous, or ostentatiously contemptuous about death, but to await the season of it as one of the operations of Nature. As you are now awaiting the season when the fœtus shall come out of the womb of your wife, thus await the season when your soul shall fall out of these its teguments.” *

The transformation of insects has been brought in aid of the same pleasing idea; and although, when taken by itself, no stress can be laid upon it as a philosophical argument, yet, when joined to other considerations, it will not appear without some force to those who have directed their attention to the analogies of nature. It shows at least that the supposition is not quite *anomalous*, when compared with what we actually know of the works of God; and it accords happily with the

* Marc. Anton. Lib. ix. c. 3.—See also Seneca's Epistle, end of Letter 102.

numberless instances in which the instincts and the economy of the lower animals seem to have been intended to typify to the fancy the arts of human life, and the arrangements of human affairs.

Dr Butler himself has not thought it unworthy of his notice, and Dr Ferguson, in the following passage, has adorned it, not only with the recommendation of his eloquence, but almost with the colours of poetry.

“ It has been observed that the Author of Nature appears to delight in variety; and we may now add, not merely in the variety of description that may serve to distinguish quiescent natures, but in the variety of steps also incident to the progress and continued existence of one and the same being.

“ Such are the successive variations exhibited in every part of the vegetable, the animal, and the intellectual kingdom. Among these there are examples of progression coming in one line or direction to an end, but renewed in a different one. The butterfly originates in a species of egg, which is deposited on the leaf of a plant, from which the animal after he is hatched may derive his nourishment. He lives at first in the form of a worm or caterpillar. He enjoys the food that is provided for him, and, as far as we are qualified to observe, bears no prognostic of any farther destination. But, having grown to a certain dimension, he becomes restless in his place, and removes to some place of retreat, in which he may

“ repose and end his life undisturbed. He mounts
“ to some height from the ground, and makes him-
“ self fast, while his animal functions are suspend-
“ ed, or apparently cease. In the meantime he
“ takes a new form, and, cased with an inflexible
“ crust, becomes what the naturalists have called
“ an aurelia or chrysalis, without any power of lo-
“ cal motion, or any appearance of life.

“ But to the changes which he has thus under-
“ gone succeeds in the proper season a change still
“ farther removed from his original state. He
“ awakes from his torpid condition, breaks the crust
“ of the chrysalis in which he was cased, is borne
“ aloft upon wings variegated in the pride of most
“ beautiful colours ; and thus from a reptile that
“ crept on the ground, or devoured the grosser
“ part of a leaf on which he was hatched, he comes
“ to perform all his movements in the air, and
“ scarcely touches a plant but to suck from its
“ flower the finest part of the juices ; he sports in
“ the sun, and displays the activity of a new life,
“ during the heat and the light of noon.” *

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. I. pp. 324,
325.

SECTION II.

Of the Evidences for a Future State arising from the Human Constitution, and from the circumstances in which Man is placed.

The presumptions hitherto suggested in proof of a future state, and which are drawn from the *nature* of mind, form what is commonly called the *metaphysical* argument on this subject. Those which I am now to state form what is called the *moral* argument. They are drawn chiefly from a comparison of the constitution of man with the circumstances in which he is placed at present; and when combined together they form a mass of evidence incomparably more satisfactory and impressive than any conviction arising from metaphysical disquisitions.

The field of speculation which the *moral argument* for a future state opens to the mind is so extensive, or rather so boundless, that in the following remarks I must confine my attention to a few of those particulars which appear to myself to be more peculiarly important. Among these the most obvious, and to the bulk of mankind one of the most striking, is the presumption arising from

(1st,) The natural *desire* of immortality, and the anticipations of futurity inspired by *hope*.

These desires and anticipations are not to be con-

founded with the animal principle of *self-preservation*, nor even with that *love of life* which is natural to every man who is in good health and spirits, and whose situation in the world is easy and comfortable. The instinctive principle of self-preservation operates with as little reflection on our part as the winking of our eyelids when the organ of sight is threatened with a sudden injury, or as the effort we make to preserve the balance of the body when we are in danger of falling. And as for the cool and deliberate love of life, it is founded chiefly on our attachment to sensual enjoyments, or to those frivolous distinctions that are connected with our present condition ; whereas the desire of *immortality* arises from our *rational nature*, from our ardent aspirings at excellence and perfection, and from the consciousness we have of the indefinite progress of which our powers are capable. Indeed, the most effectual of all remedies against that inordinate love of life which interferes with the discharge of our duties, is a firm conviction of the soul's immortality ; that conviction which can alone enable a rational mind to " smile at the dagger and defy " its point." Even in those men who are the most sceptical on this subject, when they sacrifice life in a worthy cause, and from a regard to the obligation of conscience, they are probably influenced at the moment (perhaps unknowingly to themselves, for we are not always acquainted with the real motives of our own actions,) by some indistinct anticipations of a future existence. For what is

the exultation accompanying a good conscience but a fearless confidence in futurity, or, in other words, a conviction that we have recommended ourselves to the favour of the Righteous Governor of the universe. On the other hand, where the hope and belief of immortality are eradicated from the mind by habits of dissipation or of profligacy, and where sensual enjoyments are regarded as the sole constituents of happiness, a mean and cowardly love of life seldom fails to prevail. The prayer ascribed to Mæcenas is the genuine wish of such an Epicurean.

Debilem facito manu,
 Debilem pede, coxa ;
 Tuber adstrue gibberum,
 Lubricos quate dentes ;
 Vita dum superest, bene est.
 Hanc mihi, vel acutâ
 Si sedeam cruce, sustine.*

Perhaps, however, even in this wretched attachment to life, which has been frequently discovered by profligates under the greatest pressure of bodily sufferings, and when their minds seem to have been completely relieved by habits of scepticism from all prospect of future punishment, we may trace the secret workings of that instinctive horror at anni-

* Seneca, Ep. 101.

“ Mécenas fut un galant homme,
 “ Il a dit quelque part : qu'on me rende impotent,
 “ Cul-de-jatte, goutteux, manchot ; pourvu qu'en somme,
 “ *Je vive* ; c'est assez, je suis plus que content.”

La Fontaine, Fab.

hilation which is probably inseparable from the human constitution.

As the love of life is a distinct principle from the desire of immortality, so those occasional longings for death which good men may feel, when tired and satiated with earthly enjoyments, or when those tender ties are broken which united their hearts to this world, are carefully to be distinguished from a wish for annihilation. The truth is, that it is in such situations that the desire and hope of a future and a better existence are most strongly felt; and that this desire and hope, although they contribute powerfully to reconcile us to our lot, and afford us the strongest motives to remain without murmuring in the station which is assigned us, are yet in a great degree the causes of the disrelish we occasionally feel for life and its pursuits, and of the satisfaction with which we look forward to the grave. I do not deny that a wish for annihilation may have been felt by some men whose prospects of futurity were alarming, and perhaps by others of the worthiest dispositions when under the influence of a gloomy imagination. There is, too, a certain state of lassitude, inactivity, and apathy, which probably most men have experienced, which renders us not only averse to every exertion, but disposes us to wish for rest rather than enjoyment. In this diseased state of the mind it is possible that the prospect of annihilation might give little disquiet, and might even be more agreeable than that of the active scenes on

which we may afterwards enter.* But the general fact unquestionably is, that an ardent desire of immortality is natural to every mind whose prospects are not darkened by remorse, or by a constitutional melancholy, and which is capable of exerting all its various faculties in full vigour. It deserves, too, to be remarked, that this desire is felt most strongly by the best and wisest of men, by those who have devoted their lives to the pursuit of knowledge and to the practice of virtue; and that they who give the readiest reception to the cavils of sceptics, and who can most easily reconcile themselves to the thoughts of annihilation, are men who

* Such seems to have been the state of Gray's mind when he wrote his ode to his friend Mr West, "*Barbaras ædes aditure mecum,*" &c. In this ode the following stanzas occur :

O ego felix, vice si (nec unquam
Surgerem rursus) simili cadentem
Parca me lenis sineret quieto
Fallere Letho !

Multà flagranti radiisque cincto
Integris ah ! quam nihil inviderem,
Cum Dei ardentes medius quadrigas
Sentit Olympus ?

In the Appendix to a work entitled *Memoirs of Dr Joseph Priestley*, written by himself, with a continuation by his son Joseph Priestley, these stanzas are quoted as a proof that Gray did *not* look forward with anxious hope to a future state.—See Appendix, No. ii. p. 318. The authors of this appendix, we are given to understand in the title-page, were Thomas Cooper, President Judge of the fourth district of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. William Christie. In reply to this remark I have only to refer the reader to the Second Volume of Gray's Works by Mason, p. 140.—(Letter xxxi. from Mr Gray to Mr Stonehewer.)

are devoted to sensual pursuits, or who are intoxicated with the vanity of earthly distinctions. This is not owing merely to anticipations of reward and of punishment, but to the different ideas of *happiness* which these two classes of men have formed. The one places it in intellectual and moral pleasures, which we know may be enjoyed to the last moment of life, and which we can conceive to be enjoyed in much higher perfection, when the soul is separated from the body. The other places it in animal gratifications, which are peculiar to a certain period of life, for which we lose our relish as we advance in years, and which in all probability will be confined to this first and lowest stage of our existence.

To this cause it is probably owing that in most cases the desire and *hope* of a future existence increase in our declining years, to the support of which they are then more peculiarly necessary. Plato alludes to this fact in that fine and pathetic phrase of *ελπις γηροτροφος*, which he quotes from Pindar; a phrase which conveys so much in two words, that I shall not run the risk of weakening it by attempting to illustrate it by any comment.*

* Plato de Rep. I. p. 330, F. 331, A. τῷ μηδὲν ἑαυτῷ (ἄδικον addit Stobæus, qui h. l. exscripsit, p. 756.) ξυνειδῶτι ἡδεῖα ἐλπίς ἀει πάρεσι, καὶ ἀγαθὴ γηροτρόφος, ὡς καὶ Πίνδαρος λέγει. Χαρίεντως γάρ περ τῶν ἐκείνος ἵππεν, ὅτι ὅς ἂν δικαίως καὶ ὁσίως τὸν βίον διαγάγη, γλυκεῖα οἱ καρδίαν ἀτιτάλλοισα γηροτρόφος ξυναορῇ ἐλπίς, ἃ μάλιστα θνατῶν πολύτροφον γνώμαν κυβεργᾷ.

Quicunque juste sancteque vitam exegerit, dulcis eum cor

Now, what inference are we to draw from this natural desire and expectation? That they are subservient while we are here to the best of purposes, by increasing our happiness and animating our virtue, cannot be disputed. Perhaps it may be supposed that this was the *very* purpose, and the *only* purpose which they were intended to answer; that we are encouraged by nature to indulge them, merely to render us happier in this world, and better members of society: But that we ought not to conclude from this that they will ever be gratified. But is not this supposition founded on a sceptical weakness, similar to what some men have indulged with respect to the immutability of truth, and the competency of the human faculties to discover it? If such suggestions are listened to there is an end of all reasoning and all belief. That what is clearly demonstrated to our faculties is eternally and immutably true, the constitution of our nature forces us to believe; and when we reflect on the attributes of the Deity we feel this conviction if possible strengthened. In like manner,

nutriens, senectutem fovens, comitatur spes, quæ maxime mortalium volubilem animum gubernat.—Versus restituit Hermann.

γλυκῆα οἱ καρδίαν ἀπιτάλλοισα γῆ—

ροσφόρος ξυναορῆ

ἐλπίς, ἧ μάλιστα θνατῶν

πολυεσθρον γνώμαν κυβερνᾷ.

Pindari Carmina et Fragmenta cum adnotationibus iterum curavit Chr. Gottl. Heyne. Vol. III. pp. 80, 81. Lipsiæ, 1817.

whatever desires are evidently implanted in our minds by nature, and are encouraged by the noblest and worthiest principles of our constitution, we may reasonably conclude, will in due time be gratified under the government of a Being infinite both in power and goodness. At least it must be allowed, that, if other considerations appear favourable to our future expectations, the natural desires of the human mind ought to be allowed some force in strengthening the presumption.

(2dly,) Let us reflect, in the second place, on the natural sentiment of the mind when under the influence of remorse. A murder (we shall suppose) has been perpetrated, from motives of fraud or revenge, without any human witness, and without any circumstance that could lead to a detection. No punishment is to be apprehended from any earthly tribunal. Is this sufficient to quiet the apprehensions of the murderer? Experience shows us the reverse, and furnishes numberless instances in which the recollection of such a crime, though committed with every circumstance of privacy, has been sufficient to poison all the enjoyments which luxury could offer, and even to render life itself insupportable. In vain the murderer seeks for a refuge from the persecutions of conscience by mingling in the busy scenes of life. He has lost the intrepidity of innocence, and trembles to look even his friends in the face, lest his guilt should appear through all the disguises of his countenance. From society he

flies to solitude, which affords a good man a retreat from the storms of fortune; and where the soul, long harassed with cares, and sick of the restraints which the world imposes, indulges the natural current of its thoughts and feelings, and gradually regains its strength and its serenity. But the pleasures of solitude are known to the virtuous alone. To the guilty it is full of terrors. Every walk is haunted with spectres, and the tranquillity and peace he sees around him only render his guilt and his danger the more striking to himself and the more alarming. Even the reflection that his crimes have passed unpunished on earth serves at times to aggravate his horrors. The blood he has spilt seems on that very account to call the louder to Heaven for vengeance; and he conceives his punishment in a future state to be the more certain and the more unavoidable, that he has made no atonement while here to the society he has injured. Under the influence of such apprehensions a murderer has been frequently known, many years after the perpetration of the crime, to feel his existence so intolerable a burden that he has voluntarily revealed his own guilt, and delivered himself up to an ignominious death. The vulgar generally believe that Providence sometimes interferes by a miracle to bring secret murders to light; but in this, as in other instances, Providence acts agreeably to general laws, and has provided a restraint on this most dreadful of all crimes by that infatuation which remorse produces, and which seldom fails,

sooner or later, to lead to a detection. Facts of this sort are surely strong indications of the moral government of God, and afford strong presumptions of a future retribution.

(3dly,) The observations which have hitherto been made relate entirely to those anticipations of futurity which nature forces occasionally on the minds of all men, even of those who are the least disposed to serious reflection. Let us now consider the presumptions which arise from a more extensive and philosophical survey of our faculties and of our situation in the world.

When we examine the instincts and the external condition of the lower animals, we find them to be exactly accommodated to those desires and wants which nature has given them. What were the ultimate purposes of their creation it is impossible for us to ascertain. Some of them seem to be placed in this world chiefly for the use of man, so wonderfully are their instincts adapted to his purposes; others, perhaps, were intended for no farther end than to taste to a certain degree of the bounty of their Maker, and (as Goldsmith expresses it) “to animate the solitudes of nature.” But, with respect to all of them, we may remark, an exact accommodation of their condition to their desires and to their capacities of enjoyment. These desires and enjoyments seem to be entirely of the *sensual* kind, excepting perhaps when an animal is under the influence of the conjugal or the parental affections,

or in the case of those who delight in the society of their own species. But whatever desires or whatever capacities of enjoyment any animal is possessed of, the object fitted to gratify it is supplied by nature, and the animal is guided by an unerring impulse to the employment of those means by which the object is to be attained. The enjoyments may be low in comparison to ours, but they are suited to the creatures for whom they are destined, and they are not degraded in their estimation by any mortifying comparisons with the pleasures which belong to superior orders of beings. Indeed, they do not seem to have the least curiosity about the nature of any of the objects which surround them. As the use of reason for the gratification of their wants is superseded by their instincts, the powers of observation and reflection have been kindly withheld from them ; and, as nature has in a great measure taken upon herself the care of their subsistence and accommodation, and employs them as blind instruments for the accomplishment of her purposes, so she seems to have relieved them of any anxiety for the future by limiting their views to the present moment.

How different is all this from the condition of man ! He is left in many respects to the guidance of his own understanding, and is incapable of accommodating his conduct to the established course of nature, till he has made himself acquainted with it by experience and observation. To this observation of nature he is prompted not only by his ne-

cessities, but by the principle of *curiosity*, which leads him to prosecute his researches even when his situation is easy and comfortable ; and which therefore does not appear, like the instincts of the brutes, to be subservient merely to the accommodation of his present existence. It may be said, perhaps, that even when our curiosity engages us in inquiries which are merely speculative, we are not entitled to conclude that these inquiries will never be attended with any practical utility ; that many discoveries highly important to mankind have been made by men who had no views of their application at the time, and who perhaps lived many ages before these views occurred ; and that therefore an important use of the principle of curiosity may be traced without extending our views beyond the present world. The objection, I acknowledge, is so far just ; but still it seems to me that this principle has a manifest reference to higher purposes. If man was intended only to be an inhabitant of this globe, and if the principle of curiosity was bestowed on him only in subserviency to his accommodation here, whence is it that he is in general led to inquire more anxiously about distant and singular phenomena than about those which, from their nearness or frequency, we should expect to be the most interesting ? Whence is it that his curiosity extends beyond the surface of this globe, or at least beyond those astronomical facts which may admit of a practical application ? Whence is it that he delights in tracing the orbit and computing the motions of

a planet invisible to the naked eye, or in predicting the return of a comet many ages after he shall be laid in the dust? But perhaps little could be inferred from our curiosity on these subjects, if we were not so wonderfully supplied with the means of gratifying it. Such, however, are the powers of the human mind, that while the science of medicine remains involved in uncertainty and error; while the structure of the human body is still imperfectly known; while mechanics are not yet agreed about the best form of the plough,—we are able to contemplate the provisions which nature has made for supplying light to the superior and more distant planets; we are able to measure the velocity of light itself; and, without passing the boundaries of the visible universe, can transport ourselves in imagination to regions where the earth and all the planetary spaces vanish from the eye. Even, however, when we are arrived at this limit, we feel that the distance we have passed is but a point in comparison of that infinite space which forces itself on the mind with an irresistible conviction of its necessary existence.

With respect to our own globe, how eager is our curiosity to know the transactions of those generations which have occupied it before us! And after exhausting all the treasures of remote antiquity, how do we complain of the shortness of that period which limits the province of history! Our views, too, are often turned forwards to the dark regions of futurity, where we see *time*, like *space*, stretching to in-

finity, and we cannot help inquiring what events are likely to happen in succeeding ages. Shall one generation of men follow another in endless succession, and each return to its original nothing? Or is this world only a state of preparation for higher scenes, where our intellectual and moral powers may continually advance nearer and nearer to perfection?

I have hitherto taken no notice of that curiosity we feel concerning the great Author of all the wonders we see around us. Few will dispute that it is natural and reasonable in man to inquire concerning his own origin and that of the various tribes of animals he sees continually rising into existence; concerning that power which put in motion the different parts of the material universe, and that wisdom which is the source of its order and beauty. Our inquiries on these subjects are essentially different, both in their nature and object, from all the others in which we can employ our faculties; and our disposition to engage in them affords a presumption in favour of a future state perfectly distinct from those that arise from our restless and insatiable curiosity about the objects of science; and a presumption, we may add, not liable to the same objections which might possibly be urged against some of the foregoing reasonings. In our astronomical and physical researches, for example, our object is to ascertain the laws of nature; or, in other words, to discover and to classify facts; and consequently, our inquiries, though they

lead us into a more extensive field, are precisely the same in kind with those which lay the foundation of the practical arts, and of our conduct in the common affairs of life. It might perhaps therefore be imagined that our curiosity concerning the distant parts of the universe, and the discoveries to which it has led, do not justify the conclusions I formerly deduced from them, as these discoveries are only to be regarded as the accidental and unavoidable result of principles which were implanted in our minds for very different purposes: That although the knowledge of many astronomical facts may not be subservient to our accommodation here, and although our faculties were not bestowed on us in order that we might be qualified for discovering them, yet that the same measure of curiosity and of genius which was necessary for the purposes of life could not fail to bring also to light a variety of truths which do not admit of a practical application. But what shall we say of our curiosity concerning the Author of Nature, and the satisfaction we derive in contemplating the marks of power, wisdom, and goodness which are impressed on his works? To what purpose are we rendered capable of elevating our thoughts to him, if we are never to enjoy a clearer view of his nature and attributes, and of the manner in which he governs the material and the moral world? All that philosophy discovers to us with respect to the events which happen in either, and all that is useful for the purposes of human life to know, amounts only

to this, that particular events are constantly conjoined together, so that when we see the one we may expect the other ; but although we can discover no more, curiosity is not satisfied. Our constitution determines us to believe that every event requires an efficient cause, or implies the operation of power. And it is this principle of our nature which suggests the belief of a Deity. But how he operates, whether mediately or immediately, and how the connection between mind and matter is carried on, are questions which, although they must excite the curiosity of every man capable of reflection, we may venture to say will never be resolved by human genius. Wherever we direct our inquiries, whether to the anatomy and physiology of animals, to the growth of vegetables, to the chemical attractions and repulsions, or to the motions of the heavenly bodies, we perpetually perceive the effects of powers which cannot belong to mere matter. To a certain length we are able to proceed ; but in every research we meet with an impassable line—a line which is marked with sufficient distinctness, and which no man now thinks of passing who has just views of the nature and object of philosophy. It was indeed by pointing it out that Bacon did so much service to science. But although the nature of these powers, and the mode of their operations, are not the objects of our knowledge at present, we are certain of their existence, and of their acting in subserviency to wise design. So much it was necessary for man to know, to lay a foundation for natural religion, and we can

conceive no other purpose to which this knowledge is subservient. It was plainly intended, then, that man should have the idea of overruling power and wisdom : but to what end this idea if we are not to exist hereafter ? And why is our curiosity so strong with respect to things beyond the limit of human inquiry, but to lead our thoughts forward to futurity ? If it has not this effect on the mind, the contemplation of the infinite perfections of the Deity, and even a view of the magnificence of the material universe, could only serve to damp the ardour of human pursuits, and make the business of life appear unworthy of our regard. When we return from our excursions through the immensity of space and time to a view of ourselves and of the globe we inhabit, what a short span does human life appear, and how contemptible this boasted theatre of human ambition ! “ *Hoc est punctum quod inter tot gentes ferro et igni dividitur:—cum te in illa vere magna sustuleris, quoties videbis exercitus sub rectis ire vexillis, libebit dicere : it nigrum campis agmen ; formicarum iste discursus est in angusto laborantium.*” *

“ *O pudor ! O stolidi præceps vesania voti !*

“ *Quantula pars rerum est, in qua se gloria jactat,*

“ *Ira fremit, metus exanimat, dolor urit, egestas*

“ *Cogit opes ferro, insidiis, flamma atque veneno*

“ *Cernitur, et trepido fervent humana tumultu.*” †

Such reflections can scarcely fail to force them-

* Seneca.

† Buchan. de Sphæra, Lib. i. l. 678.

selves on every mind which contrasts the field of its present exertions with those enlarged prospects of the universe which philosophy opens ; and they are certainly reflections which neither contribute to make us happier in ourselves, nor more useful citizens. On the contrary, their tendency in both respects is so manifestly unfavourable, that it may be safely affirmed, that, if man had no intimations of a future existence, it would have been better for him never to have extended his views beyond this globe and the period of human life, instead of embracing, as at present, a stretch of duration and of space which throws a ridicule on the whole history of human affairs.

But if, on the other hand, we vary the supposition, and are led by a view of the magnificence of nature and the Divine perfections to look forward to a better world, the scene in which we are placed at present will be dignified in our estimation from the important purposes to which it is subservient ; and while we pity the folly of those who consider earthly enjoyments as the ultimate objects of their pursuit, we will feel ourselves called on by the most powerful motives to a strenuous discharge of all our various duties.

These observations sufficiently show, that, if man was created for this life alone, he possesses faculties above his condition ; and that, if he were to act upon the supposition of his annihilation at death, the extensive views he is able to form of the universe would render him more unfit to perform his

part as a member of society than if his intellectual attainments had been more moderate and confined. But if our *faculties* are above our condition, our *curiosity* is still greater than our faculties can satisfy. And here, if I am not mistaken, we may perceive an additional intimation of our future destiny.

It is justly observed by Mr Maclaurin, in his View of Newton's Discoveries, as a very remarkable circumstance in our present condition—" That the
" inhabitants of this earth are entirely cut off from
" all communication with the other great bodies of
" the universe, and that it is highly probable that
" similar obstacles prevent the possibility of a com-
" munication betwixt the other planets and be-
" twixt the different systems. We are able by
" telescopes to discover very plainly mountains,
" precipices, and cavities in the moon; but who
" tread those precipices, or what purpose those
" great cavities serve, we know not; and we are at
" a loss to conceive how this planet, without any
" atmosphere, vapours, or seas, (as is now the com-
" mon opinion of astronomers,) can serve for like
" purposes as our earth. We observe sudden and
" surprising revolutions on the surface of the great
" planet Jupiter which would be fatal to the inha-
" bitants of the earth. We observe in them all
" enough to raise our curiosity, but not to satisfy
" it. From hence, as well as from the state of the
" moral world, and many other considerations, we
" are induced to believe that our present state

“ would be very imperfect without a subsequent
“ one, wherein our views of nature and of its great
“ Author may be more clear and satisfactory. It
“ does not appear suitable to the wisdom that
“ shines throughout all nature to suppose that we
“ should see so far, and have our curiosity so much
“ raised concerning the works of God, only to be
“ disappointed at the end. As man is undoubtedly
“ the chief being upon this globe, and this globe
“ may be no less considerable in the most valuable
“ respects than any other in the solar system, and
“ this system for aught we know not inferior to
“ any in the universal system, so, if we should
“ suppose man to perish without ever arriving at
“ a more complete knowledge of nature than the
“ very imperfect one he attains in his present state,
“ by analogy or parity of reason, we might con-
“ clude, that the like desires would be frustrated in
“ the inhabitants of all the other planets and sys-
“ tems, and that the beautiful scheme of nature
“ would never be unfolded, but in an exceedingly
“ imperfect manner to any of them. This, there-
“ fore, naturally leads us to consider our present
“ state as only the dawn or beginning of our exist-
“ ence, and as a state of preparation or probation
“ for farther advancement ; which appears to have
“ been the opinion of the most judicious philoso-
“ phers of old. And whoever attentively considers
“ the constitution of human nature, particularly
“ the desires and passions of men, which appear

“ greatly superior to their present objects, will
“ easily be persuaded that man was designed for
“ higher views than of this life. These the Author
“ of Nature may have in reserve to be opened up to
“ us at proper periods of time, and after due pre-
“ paration. Surely it is in his power to grant us
“ a far greater improvement of the faculties we al-
“ ready possess, or even to endow us with new fa-
“ culties, of which at this time we have no idea,
“ for penetrating farther into the scheme of nature,
“ and approaching nearer unto himself, the First
“ and Supreme Cause. We know not how far it
“ was proper or necessary that we should not
“ be let into knowledge at once, but should ad-
“ vance gradually ; that by comparing new objects
“ or new discoveries with what was known to us
“ before, our improvement might be more com-
“ plete and regular ; or how far it might be neces-
“ sary or advantageous that intelligent beings
“ should pass through a kind of infancy of know-
“ ledge ; for new knowledge does not consist so
“ much in our having access to a new object as in
“ comparing it with others already known, observ-
“ ing its relations to them, or discerning what it
“ has in common with them, and wherein their dis-
“ parity consists. Thus our knowledge is vastly
“ greater than the sum of what all its objects sepa-
“ rately could afford ; and when a new object comes
“ within our reach, the addition to our knowledge
“ is the greater the more we already know, so that

“ it increases not as the new objects increase, but
“ in a much higher proportion.” *

Having said so much with respect to our *intellectual powers*, and the disproportion which they bear to the scene of their present exertions, I proceed to consider another presumption in favour of a future state, suggested by our means of *enjoyment*, contrasted with the conceptions of happiness and of perfection which we are able to form.

In appealing to this contrast, I do not mean to deny that there is a rich variety of genuine pleasures placed within our reach even at present, and that the sum of happiness in human life far exceeds the sum of misery. But still the happiness which falls to the lot even of the most fortunate bears no proportion to what we can conceive, or to that of which we feel our natures to be capable. The pleasures of a good conscience are indeed satisfactory and sublime; but how many are the imperfections even of the most virtuous! How much of their life is spent before they attain to an uniform and settled tranquillity, by correcting the defects of their constitutional or acquired tempers, and by subduing the violence of their youthful passions! How often is their serenity overset by an hereditary melancholy, or by those bodily diseases which disturb the imagination! Nor is it only *our own* imperfections which affect our tranquillity. How

* Maclaurin's Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, B. vi. chap. 9.

often is it disturbed by those of our friends ! How often do we see a trifling collision of passions or of interests interrupt the harmony of men who would willingly sacrifice their lives for each other ; or a groundless suspicion and misapprehension occasion a temporary coldness between those who, if they could read each other's hearts, would see every thought pure, honourable, and sincere ! While we are mortified with these reflections, can we avoid cherishing the hope, that the time will come when our own characters shall approach nearer to that ideal perfection to which nature teaches us to aspire ; when the sunshine of the soul shall be no longer liable to be overcast by the gloom of imagination or the storms of the passions ; and when in the society of those whom we loved on earth, freed with us from the weaknesses of mortality, we shall enjoy the intercourse of minds unobscured by earthly prejudices, and indulge the kind affections of the heart, unalloyed by the possibility of change or of separation.

Upon this disproportion between our conceptions of happiness and the possible attainments of human nature is founded (according to the ingenious remark of Lord Bacon) the delight we derive from the fictions of poetical imagination. And this delight, which is one of the purest and most exquisite we are capable of enjoying, is considered by the same profound and original writer as furnishing a strong proof that the principles of our constitution have a

reference to higher scenes than those with which our senses are conversant at present. *

To the truth of the fact on which this argument of Bacon's proceeds most men, I believe, will be ready to bear witness from their own experience, that the happiness of human life falls far short of those conceptions which the mind has a capacity and a disposition to form. But, abstracting entirely from this consideration, and supposing all our dreams of happiness to be realized, could we fail at times to reflect on the precarious tenure by which we hold all our comforts? That a moment may dissolve our tenderest connections, and leave us only the remembrance of happiness which is

* “ Cum enim mundus sensibilis sit anima rationali dignitate
 “ inferior, videtur poësis hæc humanæ naturæ largiri, quæ his-
 “ toria denegat; atque animo umbris rerum utcunque satisfacere,
 “ cum solida haberi non possunt. Si quis enim rem
 “ acutius introspeciat, firmum ex poësi sumitur argumentum,
 “ magnitudinem rerum magis illustrem, ordinem magis perfectum,
 “ et varietatem magis pulchram, animæ humanæ complas-
 “ cere quam in natura ipsa, postlapsum reperire ullo modo possit.
 “ Quapropter cum res gestæ et eventus, qui veræ historiæ sub-
 “ jiciuntur, non sint ejus amplitudinis, in qua anima humana
 “ sibi satisfaciat, præsto est poësis, quæ facta magis heroica
 “ confingat: Cum historia vera successus rerum, minime pro
 “ meritis virtutem et scelerum narret, corrigit eam poësis, et
 “ exitus et fortunas, secundum merita et ex lege nemeseos exhibet.
 “ Cum historia vera, obvia rerum satietate et similitudine,
 “ animæ humanæ fastidio sit, reficit eam poësis, inexpectata et varia
 “ et vicissitudinum plena canens. Adeo ut poësis ista, non solum
 “ ad delectationem, sed etiam ad animi magnitudinem et ad mores conferat.”—De Aug. Scient. Lib. ii. Cap. 13.

For a translation of this passage see *Tatler*, No. 108.

never to return ? Or, if we should be so fortunate as to escape from those severer trials, that the inevitable hour is approaching when we must take a last farewell of all that is dear to us. These pangs, arising from the dissolution of the social connections, are peculiar to man. The other animals, as I already hinted, seem to enjoy in some degree the pleasures of conjugal and parental affection ; but their connections with each other are only temporary, and are plainly subservient to no other purpose than the continuation of their kind ; a circumstance, (by the way) which, added to some considerations formerly mentioned, affords a very striking instance of the benevolent care our Maker has taken to save his sensitive creatures from unnecessary sufferings.* They have no anticipation of

* The following observations have a sufficient connection with the foregoing argument to justify their insertion here as a note.

“ The spot of the *medulla spinalis*, where its two ascending main nerves that form the great brain cross one another, so that the left fasciculus of the nerves proceeds to the right, and the right fasciculus to the left hemisphere, this spot being injured there is at once an end of life, as is proved by the following facts.

“ Butchers and huntsmen know by experience that the least injury offered to this spot will be instantly fatal. The butcher will plunge his knife accordingly into the neck of the ox at that spot, and so at once cuts through the texture of the nerves. The consequence is, that the animal falls down, and after a few convulsions ceases to live. The huntsmen proceed on the same principle when they cut through the neck of the game.

“ 2d, Those animals that kill others will always seize them

the future, and of consequence no anxiety about the termination of their existence; and they are freed almost entirely from the pangs which attend the dissolution of the conjugal and parental connections. As the case in all these respects is different with man, we may reasonably presume that these deductions from his happiness are intended to answer important purposes.*

“ *by the neck, and bite through that part.* In this manner
 “ the hound will kill the hare, and the bird of prey its quarry. The pole-cat worries its prey at a single spring; and
 “ Dr Gall, that he might be thoroughly acquainted with the
 “ process, locked up a pole-cat for some time, during which
 “ he fed it only upon bones till its teeth were blunted. Whilst
 “ the pole-cat’s teeth remained blunt it was not able to kill the
 “ rabbits that were put into its kennel with the same dispatch
 “ as formerly; but when they had again grown sharp, Gall
 “ observed, that, on the very first leap it made on the rabbit,
 “ it cut the little animal’s neck on that very spot with a sharp
 “ fang, and instantaneous death ensued. He observed the
 “ same thing at a hawking party of the Emperor Joseph the
 “ Second. As soon as the hawk had reached the hare it would
 “ immediately cut through that part of her neck with its bill.”—
Gall’s System of the Functions of the Brain, extracted from
Charles Augustus Blode’s Account of Gall’s Lectures at Dresden.
 Translated from the German to serve as an Explanatory
 Companion to Gall’s Plaster Sculls.—See pp. 67, 68.

* For the length of the following note I have no apology to offer; it is enough to say that it is from the eloquent pen of D’Alembert.

“ M. de Sacy mourut le 26 Octobre 1727, âgé de soixante
 “ treize ans, chargé de travaux et de vertus, laissant à ses amis
 “ le plus cher souvenir, aux gens de lettres le plus digne modèle,
 “ aux gens de bien les plus justes regrets. Madame de Lam-
 “ bert, plus âgée que lui de sept ans, et dont l’amitié fidele et

(4thly,) There is another part of our constitution which seems to have a manifest reference to a

“ et pure avoit fait la douceur de sa vie, lui survécut pour
 “ conserver et honorer sa mémoire. Digne et triste objet de
 “ ses pleurs, il n’en eut point de repandre sur elle. Ainsi la
 “ nature, qui avoit tant fait pour le bonheur de M. de Sacy,
 “ y mit le comble par une vieillesse heureuse et paisible, ex-
 “ empte de ce sentiment douloureux que laisse au fond du cœur
 “ une perte éternelle et irréparable ; sentiment dont l’impres-
 “ sion est d’autant plus profonde, que l’ame trouve une espèce
 “ d’attrait à s’y livrer, et de douceur à en goûter l’amertume ;
 “ sentiment que sa tristesse même rend en quelque manière dé-
 “ sirable, puisqu’il nous fait regarder la mort comme un bienfait
 “ de la nature, non parce qu’elle met fin à des larmes qui nous
 “ sont chères, mais parce que ce malheur de l’humanité, si c’est
 “ un malheur de cesser de souffrir, nous est du moins commun
 “ avec ceux que nous avons tendrement aimés, et nous laisse l’es-
 “ poir consolant de les suivre bientôt dans cet asile éternel et
 “ paisible, où leur ombre nous a précédés, et où leur voix nous
 “ appelle. Madame de Lambert, qui survécut encore six années
 “ à M. de Sacy, entretint et nourrit toujours ce sentiment cher à
 “ son cœur. Elle y joignit un espoir plus consolant encore, celui
 “ que la divinité bienfaisante donne aux ames vertueuses, de se
 “ réunir un jour pour n’avoir plus à pleurer leur séparation ; es-
 “ poir en effet si propre à soulager les maux des cœurs sensibles ;
 “ espoir dont la malheureuse humanité avoit un besoin si pres-
 “ sant, qu’elle a couru, pour ainsi dire, au-devant de lui, avant
 “ que la Bonté Suprême et Eternelle voulut bien le lui présenter
 “ elle-même. Un sentiment profond et plein de vie, privé d’un
 “ objet chéri qu’il ne retrouveroit plus, et ne pouvant supporter
 “ l’idée accablante d’être anéanti pour jamais, a inspiré, intéressé,
 “ éclairé la raison, pour lui faire embrasser avec transport cette
 “ attente précieuse d’une existence immortelle, dont le premier
 “ désir n’a pas dû naître dans une tête froide et philosophe,
 “ mais dans un cœur qui avoit aimé.”

The foregoing passage seems to have touched the heart of

future state. Our moral habits continue improving to the last hour of life, and are frequently strengthened and confirmed in a very remarkable degree amidst those painful and lingering struggles which precede our dissolution. Now, all those powers of our nature, which appear to be accommodated to our present state alone, begin after a certain period to decline. This is the case with all the active powers of the body, and all the organs of perception. As we find then our moral habits are capable of improvement to the last, are we not entitled to conclude that they are intended, not merely for discharging our duties in society, but to qualify us for another existence? Indeed, were the case otherwise, it would be difficult to give any plausible account of the sufferings which commonly put a period to the life of man, and which exceed so remarkably those which fall to the share of any other species of animals.

What I have said with respect to moral habits is applicable also to our intellectual desires. In the

even the Baron de Grimm. His words are these, speaking of the éloges of D'Alembert in general: " Il y a de l' intérêt et de
 " la douceur dans les éloges de Massillon, de l'Archevêque de
 " Cambrai et de Flechier, mais il n'y en a aucun où l'on remar-
 " que une sensibilité plus vraie et plus aimable que dans celui
 " de M. de Sacy. L'auteur y peint l'amitié comme un homme
 " qui en a senti tout le charme et toute la puissance. Quand M.
 " D'Alembert fit cet éloge, il venoit de perdre Mademoiselle de
 " Léspinasse; on peut croire que ce tableau touchant fut tracé
 " sur la tombe de son amie."—Mémoires de Grimm, Tome v.
 p. 150. Londres chez Colburn, 1814.—See Note (A.)

case of those who have devoted themselves to study the ardour of curiosity frequently continues to the last unabated, and even increasing. And here, too, a boundless field of improvement opens to our view, both in our faculties themselves, to the progressive enlargement of which it is impossible for imagination to fix any limits ; and in the objects of our knowledge, which are as infinite as the works of the Creator.

(5thly,) Among the various considerations, however, which intimate a relation between this world and another state of being, there is none which has had more weight in all ages with serious and thinking men of every description, (whether their minds have been enlightened by philosophy or not,) than the discordance between our moral judgments and feelings, and the course of human affairs.

That the course of human affairs is *on the whole* agreeable to our ideas of good and ill-desert is sufficiently obvious, not only from that self-approbation which is the inseparable attendant of virtue, but from the tendency which virtue has to procure us the favour of the world. Whoever reflects with attention upon this will perceive manifest indications that the Being who presides over the universe is interested on the side of good men ; and that whatever occasional evils may befall them, their happiness is the leading object of those *general laws* by which his government is conducted.

The existence, at the same time, of these occa-

sional evils cannot be disputed ; nor is it possible to deny, that in consequence of them the moral government of God appears to us at present not altogether perfect. It is on the supposition of a future state alone that the difficulty can be removed ; and without it many of the most striking phenomena of human life must remain for ever inexplicable. In some parts of the material universe we are able to trace the most complete and the most systematical order and beauty ; and we invariably find that, in proportion as our knowledge extends, our views of its government become more pleasing and more satisfactory. The condition of the brutes, too, appears to us to be wonderfully accommodated to their various natures. Why then should we suppose that it is with respect to man alone that the scheme of Providence is to be left incomplete, or reject a doctrine supported by so striking a concurrence of separate and independent arguments, which furnishes a key to all the apparent disorders of the moral world ?

These presumptions in favour of this most important of all truths, drawn from the course of events in human life, are stated with great force in one of the most eloquent passages of Mr Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, to which, on account of its length, I must beg leave to refer the reader.*

I am aware of an objection that may be stated to this reasoning, and which has in fact been urged with considerable ingenuity and plausibility by Mr

• See Vol. I. p. 41.

Hume; that the only safe principle on which we can pretend to judge of those parts of the universe which have not fallen under our examination, is by concluding them to be analogous to what we have observed.

—————Of God above or man below,
What can we reason but from what we know?

Now, the only fact we know with respect to the moral government of God is, that the distribution of happiness and misery in human life is in a great measure promiscuous. Is it not then a most extraordinary inference from this fact, to conclude that there must be a future state of existence to correct the inequalities of the present scene? Would it not be more reasonable and more agreeable to the received rules of philosophising to conclude either that the idea of a future state is a mere chimera, or that, if such an idea shall ever be realized, the distribution of happiness and misery will continue to be as promiscuous as we have experienced it to be? The objection, I confess, is not without some plausibility, but it will not bear an accurate examination. For

1. Admitting the distribution of happiness and misery in human life to be altogether promiscuous, this is not the *only fact* from which we are entitled to reason concerning the moral government of God. Our own moral constitution is a part of the scheme of Providence no less than the order of external events; and it has been already shown that this constitution does not accord with the scene in which

it is placed, but leads us, not only to form conceptions of a more perfect order, but to hope and expect that these conceptions will sometime or other be realized.

2. It is *not* a fact that the distribution of happiness and misery here is altogether indiscriminate. On the contrary, it has been shown, that, although the order of events does not correspond completely with our ideas of good and of ill-desert, it does so to so great a degree as must convince us that the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice are the leading objects of all those general laws by which the world is governed. The exceptions which occur to these laws arise from accidental circumstances connected with our present condition; and supposing these circumstances to be removed, the *general laws* continuing exactly as at present, nothing more perhaps would be wanting to realize our hopes with respect to the moral government of the universe.

This observation coincides in part with one of Dr Butler's concerning the *tendencies* of virtue and of vice, as contrasted with their *actual effects*. Virtue, it is evident, would be much more amply rewarded in this world than it is, and vice much more severely punished, if the characters of individuals were completely known, and if all those who felt themselves interested in the cause of morality had power corresponding to their wishes. It is further evident, that these obstacles to the natural tendencies of virtue and of vice arise

from accidental circumstances relative to our present state, whereas the tendencies themselves arise from the nature of things (or, in other words, from the moral constitution of the human mind); and therefore the moral government of the universe in general is to be judged of, not from what we actually see here, but from what we *would* see, if the tendencies of virtue and of vice were realized by their being placed in a more favourable scene of action.

It is also extremely worthy of our attention, (as the same profound author has farther remarked,) that virtue has a natural tendency to increase the power of a community or society of men in proportion as it influences the conduct of the members, by rendering the public good the common aim of their actions; by rousing the abilities of each individual to study and to promote the general interest; and by uniting them all together by the principles of justice and humanity. In this respect virtue has a natural tendency to prevail over vice, in the same manner as reason has a natural tendency to prevail over brute force. As reason, however, may, notwithstanding this tendency, be sometimes overpowered by brute force, so virtue may be sometimes overpowered by vice; but still the natural tendencies both of virtue and of reason to prevail over their opposites remain indisputable, and wherever they are prevented from being carried into effect, the natural order of things is plainly deranged or inverted.

Among the circumstances which check the natural tendencies of virtue here, it is sufficient to mention the difficulty of knowing completely the characters of others ; in consequence of which good men are prevented from forming that intimate union with each other which virtue tends to produce, and an unnatural alliance is often established between men of the most opposite views and principles. We may add to this, the shortness of human life, which seldom allows the characters of individuals to display themselves fully, or their projects of beneficence to be carried into complete execution. Other causes besides these will readily present themselves to every one ; but supposing even these to be removed, what a scene would human life become ! How complete would be the triumph of virtue over vice, even if the number of the wicked were to continue undiminished !

To illustrate a little more fully this observation concerning the natural tendency of virtue, Dr Butler supposes a kingdom or society of men perfectly virtuous to continue upon earth for a succession of ages. For his very interesting description of the happy consequences which would result from this supposition were it realized, I must refer the reader to his work.

To those who reflect seriously on the description given by Dr Butler, (the chief heads of which may be easily imagined by an intelligent reader,) and who consider at the same time how extremely probable it is (from what we know of the an-

alogies and of the unity of design displayed in the universe,) that our future condition will be not wholly different *in kind* from what we have already experienced, it will not appear a very extravagant idea to suppose, that in another state good men may be united together in such communities as have been now imagined ; perhaps united with other beings who have been trained to like habits in other parts of the universe ; for (as the same author has well observed) “ the immensity of “ the *material* world forces us to conclude that there “ must be *some* scheme of Providence vast in proportion to it.” Nothing indeed could be conceived more inconsistent with that unity or analogy of design which is everywhere conspicuous in the works of creation than to suppose, that, while all the different bodies that compose the *material* universe are manifestly related to each other, and form parts of *one* great connected whole, the *moral* events that happen on our globe are quite insulated ; and that the rational beings which inhabit it, and for whom we may reasonably presume the globe was made, have no relation whatever to other intelligent and moral natures. The presumption unquestionably is, that there is *one* great *moral* system corresponding to the *material* system ; and that the connections which we are able at present to trace so distinctly among the sensible objects which compose the one, are exhibited to us as so many intimations of some vast scheme, afterwards

to be disclosed to us, comprehending all the intelligent beings that compose the other.

The remarks of Butler now referred to, afford, in my opinion, a satisfactory answer to the objections which they were brought to refute. If the distribution of happiness and misery in this world were perfectly indiscriminate, then undoubtedly no argument for a future state could be drawn from the general laws which regulate human affairs ; or (which comes much to the same purpose) from what Dr Butler calls the *tendencies* of virtue and of vice ; and in that case the evidences of a future retribution would rest on the other considerations already stated. But the tendencies of virtue and of vice are even in this world sufficiently manifest to demonstrate that the general laws by which the universe is governed are favourable to the one and hostile to the other. The distributive justice to which we look forward hereafter is a thing not different in kind but only in degree from what we experience here. It is only an order of things carried into *effect*, towards which we everywhere around us see a *tendency*. These tendencies, too, it must be remembered, arise from the nature of things ; the obstacles to their effects are merely accidental. If these obstacles were removed virtue and vice would *really* produce the effects which they at present *tend* to produce ; or, in other words, the moral government of God would exhibit the same perfection which we trace in all the other operations of creation and Providence.

The result of all that has now been stated concerning the nature of man, considered in its relation to the circumstances in which he is placed, amounts to this, —that in the former there are many appearances to which there is nothing corresponding in the latter ; and which we may therefore regard as so many intimations that the ends of our being are placed beyond the reach of our researches at present. “ Whoever considers” (says Dr Ferguson) “ the anatomy of the foetus will find in the structure of bones and muscles, in the organs of respiration and digestion, sufficient indications of a design to remove his being into a different state. The observant and intelligent may perhaps find in the mind of man parallel signs of his future destination.” This remark, which was first made in his *Institutes of Moral Philosophy*,* he has since illustrated more fully in his larger work, where he has placed it in so striking a point of view, that I shall borrow his words as the most impressive conclusion to which I can bring this part of my argument.

“ If the human foetus were qualified to reason of his prospects in the womb of his parent, as he afterwards may do in his range on this terrestrial globe, he might no doubt apprehend in the breach of his umbilical chord, and in his separation from the womb, a total extinction of life ; for how could he conceive it to continue after his only supply of nourishment from the vital stock of his parent had ceased ? He might indeed observe many

* Published for the use of his students.

“ parts of his organization and frame which should
“ seem to have no relation to his state in the womb.
“ For what purpose, he might say, this duct which
“ leads from the mouth to the intestines? Why
“ these bones that each apart becomes hard and
“ stiff, while they are separated from one another
“ by so many flexures or joints? Why these jaws
“ in particular made to move upon hinges, and
“ these germs of teeth which are pushing to be felt
“ above the surface of the gums? Why the sto-
“ mach through which nothing is made to pass?
“ And these spongy lungs, so well fitted to drink
“ up the fluids, but into which the blood that
“ passes everywhere else is scarcely permitted to
“ enter?

“ To these queries, which the fœtus was neither
“ qualified to make nor to answer, we are now well
“ apprised the proper answer would be,—the life
“ which you now enjoy is but temporary; and these
“ particulars which now seem to you so prepos-
“ terous, are a provision which nature has made for
“ a future course of life which you have to run, and
“ in which their use and propriety will appear suf-
“ ficiently evident.

“ Such are the prognostics of a future destina-
“ tion that might be collected from the state of the
“ fœtus; and similar prognostics of a destination
“ still future may be collected from present appear-
“ ances in the life and condition of man.”

I shall only add further on this subject, the con-

firmation which the foregoing reasonings derive from their coincidence with the universal belief of mankind. Of the reality of this belief (however disfigured by superstition and ignorance) no one can doubt, who is either acquainted with the history of the ancient world, or with the voyages of our modern navigators ; and wherever the possibility of an existence after death is admitted, the doctrine of a future state is in so far confirmed by the natural sentiments of mankind, without being at all affected by the accessory articles of belief, which vary in every different instance. “ That the souls of men “ survive the dissolution of the body” (says Cicero) “ we may consider as a truth sanctioned by the universal belief of all nations.”—“ In what manner “ this anticipation of ages yet to come strikes its “ root so deeply in the principles of our frame I “ pretend not to explain.”*—Two passages which at once illustrate Cicero’s own opinion concerning the force of the argument from general consent, and establish the *truth of the fact* on which the argument proceeds as far as the history of the world was known in his age.

With respect to those rude tribes which have been visited by our modern travellers and navigators it would be endless to enter into details. It is sufficient to observe in general terms, that the assertion of Cicero concerning those parts of the globe

* Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi sæculorum quoddam augurium.

with which he was acquainted may confidently be extended to all which have been since explored. That it may not be possible to find out some exceptions to the universality of the fact, I will not venture positively to affirm,—not that I myself am disposed to think that any such exceptions do exist, but because I am unwilling to afford any ground for cavil, particularly in a case like the present, where I am in no danger of injuring my argument by the concessions I make. It is enough for my purpose to remark, that, if any tribe of men is to be found altogether destitute of religious impressions, it must be a tribe so sunk in the scale of civilization as to have lost at the same time the other characteristical marks of a rational and moral nature. In hazarding this assertion I am supported by the unsuspicious authority of Mr Hume. “Look out” (says he) “for a people entirely destitute of religion: If you find them at all, be assured that they are but few degrees removed from brutes.”

I shall just add to this observation, that, in reading the accounts given by travellers of the religious opinions of savage tribes, great allowances ought to be made for the mistakes they are liable to in ascertaining the real state of the *fact*, in consequence of their imperfect acquaintance with the languages by which their information is acquired, added to the probable defects of such languages on all subjects in which abstract ideas are involved.

Many of the accounts which have been appealed to on the present occasion contain their own refu-

tation. Thus Father le Gobien, in his History of the Marianne Isles, after having affirmed that their inhabitants did not discover the slightest idea of religion, tells us immediately after, that “ they practise
“ invocation of the dead, whose skulls they preserve
“ in their houses, and to which they ascribe the
“ power of controlling the elements, of changing
“ the seasons, and of restoring health ; that they are
“ persuaded of the immortality of the soul, and acknowledge a paradise and a hell.” It is difficult to conceive how such opinions should prevail without some idea of a Deity.

In the voyages of some of our late navigators we meet with facts which, (supposing them to be well ascertained,) are not easily explicable. Such are those mentioned by Cooke and others concerning the religious opinions of the South Sea islanders. “ From
“ the rigid severity” (says he, speaking of the inhabitants of the Friendly Islands) “ with which
“ some of their mourning and religious ceremonies
“ are executed, one would expect to find that they
“ meant thereby to secure felicity to themselves beyond the grave ; but their principal object relates
“ to things merely temporal ; for they seem to have
“ little conception of future punishment for faults
“ committed in this life.”

“ The inhabitants of Otaheite” (says Hawkesworth,*) “ believe the immortality of the soul, and
“ that there are two situations after death somewhat
“ analogous to our Heaven and Hell ; but they
“ do not suppose that their actions here in the least

* Vol. II. p. 239.

“influence their future state.” Dr Douglas, the learned editor of Cooke’s last voyage, remarks how conformable to this is the belief of the inhabitants of the Ladrões or Marianne Isles, as described by Le Gobien.—“Ils sont persuadés de l’immortalité de l’âme. Ils reconnoissent même un paradis et un enfer dont ils se forment des idées assez bizarres. Ce n’est point, selon eux, la vertu ni le crime qui conduit dans ces lieux-là ; les bonnes ou les mauvaises actions n’y servent de rien.”

With respect to these assertions, I believe I might be justified in calling them in question in their full extent for the reasons already mentioned ; more particularly as I was assured by one of the most intelligent navigators of the present age,* (who, in the course of three voyages round the globe, had better opportunities than any other individual of studying the genius and character of the South Sea islanders,) that, after a residence of several months at Otaheite in the last visit he paid to that island, he committed to the flames great part of the papers he had written soon after his arrival, and which he had imagined at the time contained very curious and accurate information, in consequence of the gross mistakes which a more perfect acquaintance with the language discovered to him in his narrative. The same gentleman added, that, although the language is extremely easily acquired in so far as is necessary for the ordinary intercourse of a stranger with the natives, the case is

* Captain Bligh.

widely different where the conversation turns on more general and abstract subjects.

Admitting, however, the fact to be as stated in the foregoing extracts, it is so plainly contrary to the general history of mankind, that I should not hesitate to ascribe it to the influence of artificial habits of thinking, superinduced by political institutions. The natural sentiments of a people must not always be judged of from their established creed, as this is often manufactured by priests and politicians,—an assertion for the proof of which I need only refer to the doctrines taught by the antinomian divines of England during the usurpation of Cromwell. Indeed, these doctrines were exactly similar in substance to those which excite our astonishment so much when we hear of them among the inhabitants of Otaheite or of the Ladrone islands, the object of both being avowedly to separate faith from morality, and to associate our ideas of merit and demerit with the observance or neglect of external rites and ceremonies.* It is against the same prejudice that these noble lines of *Persius* are directed.

Quin damus id superis, de magnâ quod dare lance
Non possit magni Messalæ lippa propago :
COMPOSITUM JUS, FASQUE ANIMI ; SANCTOSQUE RECESSUS
MENTIS, ET INCOCTUM GENEROSO PECTUS HONESTO :
Hæc cedo ut admoveam templis, et farre litabo.

That the *moral* feelings of the South Sea island-

* It may perhaps be questioned if these doctrines be yet entirely abandoned by *all* the theologians of this island.

ers ought not to be rashly inferred from the imperfect accounts of their religion given by Cooke, his own testimony is sufficient to show. "The religious system" (he observes in one place) "of the inhabitants of Otaheite is extensive, and in many instances singular; but few of the common people have a perfect knowledge of it, that being chiefly confined to the priests, who are pretty numerous." (December 1777.) The traces of a political religion are discernible also in the account which he gives of the North Zealanders.

"This perpetual state of war and destructive method of conducting it operates so strongly in producing habitual circumspection, that one can hardly ever find a north Zealander off his guard either by night or by day. Indeed, no other man can have such powerful motives to be vigilant, as the preservation both of body and soul depends on it. For, according to their system of belief, the soul of the man whose flesh is devoured by the enemy is doomed to a perpetual fire, while the soul of the man whose body has been rescued from those who killed him, as well as the souls of all who died a natural death, ascend to the habitation of the gods."—In this creed we see evidently the hand of the political religionist; and accordingly Cooke adds to the passage just quoted,— "Whatever the principles of this religion may be, of which we remain very ignorant, its instructions are very strongly inculcated into them from their very infancy." (February 1777.) In its general

spirit and tendency it seems to bear a remarkable resemblance to that of the Druids, so nobly expressed by Mason in the last chorus of *Caractacus*, where, after painting the wretched condition of the cowardly and the servile, *Death* (who is the speaker) contrasts it with the happiness purchased by those who fall bravely in the field.

—Not such the meed that crowns the sons of liberty.—
No, my Britons ! Battle slain
Rapture guilds your parting hour,
I that all despotic reign
Claim but there a moment's power.
Swiftly the soul of British flame
Animates some kindred frame ;
Again to light and life triumphant flies ;
Exults again in martial extacies,
Again for freedom fights, again for freedom dies.

Upon the whole, without entering into a minute discussion of the facts alleged by particular travellers, we may safely affirm that the doctrine of a future state and of a future retribution is sanctioned by the general voice of mankind, in whatever manner the principles of their nature may be modified by the place they occupy in the scale of civilization. The refinement of their sentiments on the subject varies indeed with the cultivation which their faculties have received ; but in no state of society are they altogether deprived of those hopes of futurity which lighten the pressure of their present sufferings. That these hopes originate partly in the infirmities and prejudices of men, affords no presump-

tion whatever against the reality of the objects towards which they are directed ; for here, as in many other instances, the tendency of our prejudices coincides with the conclusions of an enlightened reason ; and affords to those who enjoy the comprehensive views of the universe which philosophy opens, an additional ground of gratitude to that Providence which, as in the case of the individual, it guards his animal existence by means of implanted instincts in the infancy of human reason, so in the case of society it often anticipates the conclusions of philosophy by prejudices inspired by our weaknesses and necessities. In this instance, however, it is not prejudice alone that leads the unenlightened savage to the truth, but the influence also of those moral considerations already illustrated, some of which are no less obvious and impressive to the rude and ignorant mind, than to those whose understandings have been illuminated, and whose feelings have been refined by science.

Of the two great principles of natural religion, the belief of a Deity and of a future state, it is remarkable that the latter seems to be still more inseparable from our constitution than the former,—a fact which coincides with a remark already made, that even absolute atheism does not exclude the possibility of our existing hereafter. Dr Robertson, who admits that “several tribes have been discovered in America which have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship,” asserts, “that the belief of a future exist-

“ence may be traced from one extremity of America to the other ; in some regions more faint and obscure, in others more perfectly developed, but nowhere unknown. The most uncivilized of its savage tribes do not apprehend death as the extinction of being. All hope for a future and more happy state, where they shall be for ever exempt from the calamities which embitter human life in its present condition.”—“The human mind,” (says the same eloquent and philosophical historian,) even when least improved and invigorated by culture, shrinks from the thoughts of dissolution, and looks forward with hope and expectation to a future existence. This sentiment, resulting from a secret consciousness of its own dignity, from an instinctive longing after immortality, is universal, and may be deemed natural. Upon this are founded the most exalted hopes of man in his highest state of improvement ; nor has nature withheld from him this soothing consolation in the most early and rude period of his progress.”

I have now stated pretty fully the principal evidences which the light of nature affords in proof of a future state. Of the different considerations I have mentioned there is perhaps not one which, taken singly, would be sufficient to establish this important truth ; but taken in conjunction their united force appears to me far to outweigh all the metaphysical doubts and difficulties which have been started on the other side of the question. They not

only all terminate in the same conclusion, but they mutually reflect light on each other; and have all that sort of consistency and connection among themselves which could hardly be supposed to take place among a series of false propositions. "Truth" (as Mr Hume has remarked) "is *one thing*, but errors are "numberless, and every man has a different one." When we find, therefore, a variety of conclusions, to which we have been led by separate and independent processes of reasoning, to be all consistent with each other, this furnishes a strong presumption that all these conclusions are true.

The same remark may be extended to the other principles of natural religion. They all hang together in such a manner, that, if any one of them be granted, it facilitates the way for the reception of all the rest. Admit, for example, the *existence* of the Deity,—his wisdom, justice, and goodness, (all of which considerations conspire powerfully in strengthening the presumption for a future state,) may almost be said to follow as corollaries from the very idea of a God;—and, on the other hand, our instinctive desire of immortality, with all the hopes and fears connected with it; our speculations concerning the nature of the soul; and a great variety of other inquiries, continually lead the thoughts to that invisible Being who is the great source of existence and the Supreme Arbiter of happiness and misery.

It may not be improper to repeat once more in this last stage of our argument, that, although the

belief of a God strengthens greatly the presumption for a future state, yet it would not necessarily follow, on the supposition of atheism, that a future state is impossible. The same *chance*, or the same *necessity* which brought us into this world, *may* carry us into another. Nay, a variety of considerations might be alleged to show that this supposition was more *probable* than the contrary one. The principal effect that the atheistic scheme would produce on the future prospects of a man who reasoned consequentially from it would be to fill his mind with uncertainty and alarm about his future destination, by leading him to consider himself as the victim of blind and unintelligent causes. Dr Butler was, I believe, the first who made this observation with respect to the possibility of a future state on the supposition of atheism ; and it has been repeated by M. Necker in his Treatise on the Importance of Religious Opinions. “ How happens it” (says this ingenious and eloquent writer) “ that some pretend “ that atheism frees us from every kind of terror “ about futurity ? I cannot perceive that such a “ conclusion follows from this fatal system. A “ God such as my heart delineates encourages and “ moderates all my feelings. I say to myself he is “ good and indulgent. He knows our weaknesses, “ he loves to produce happiness, and I see the advances of death with confidence and hope. But “ every fear would become reasonable if I lived under the dominion of an invisible nature whose revolutions and laws are unknown. I seek for some

“ means to escape from its power, but even death
“ cannot afford me a retreat, or space an asylum.
“ A blind nature surrounds me and governs me im-
“ periously. I in vain demand what is to be done
“ with me: It is deaf to my voice. Devoid of
“ thought, will, and feeling, it is governed by an
“ irresistible force, whose action is a mystery never
“ to be unfolded. What a fatal blow to my happi-
“ ness to abandon all my ideas of infinite wisdom,
“ justice, and goodness ; to believe that the universe
“ is without a Father and Governor, and that there
“ is no power in nature that I can invoke as a pro-
“ tector ! Were I even to apprehend that my pro-
“ spects terminated here, I should be less unhappy
“ if it was to a parent and a benefactor that I re-
“ signed my being. This last communication with
“ him would mitigate my sufferings. My eyes when
“ closing would perceive his power. I might still
“ hope that God remained with those I loved ; and
“ find some comfort in the thought, that my desti-
“ ny was united with his will, and that the incom-
“ prehensible darkness I was going to plunge into
“ is equally a part of his empire.”

Nor is it merely with *each other* that the principles of natural religion are connected. They have a relation to all the other principles of moral philosophy ; insomuch, that a person who entertains just views of the one never fails to entertain also just views of the other. Indeed, I do not think that I should go too far were I to assert that they have a relation to almost all the truths we know, whether

in the moral, the intellectual, or the material worlds. One thing is certain, that, in proportion as our knowledge extends, our doubts and objections disappear; new light is continually breaking in upon us from every quarter, and more of order and system appear in the universe. It is chiefly from partial and limited views of nature that scepticism arises, not only as these views suggest to us objections which would vanish upon a more enlarged acquaintance with the subject, but as they withdraw the attention from those comprehensive and sublime prospects of the universe which impress the mind with an irresistible conviction of wise and beneficent design. A natural philosopher, for example, who confines his attention to a particular problem in physical astronomy, is much less likely to be struck with the marks of Divine contrivance than if he were to attend to the solar system in general, and to study the mutual relations of its different parts. This is probably one cause of the difference between the character of some late mathematicians on the continent and those of their predecessors, that the latter had exhausted the grandest views of the universe, and left to their successors only the study of it in detail. A philosopher who (like Bacon) extends his inquiries to all the different branches of science, is still less in danger of scepticism than if he were to confine himself to the study of *physics*; and in general the more we know the more we perceive of order and system in the universe, and the more sa-

tified do we feel ourselves with the condition and the prospects of man.

It is a strong confirmation of these observations that almost all the great discoveries, both in moral and physical science, have been made by men friendly to the principles of religion; and that those writers who have affected to be sceptical on this last subject, have in general been paradoxical and sophistical in all their other scientific inquiries. This not only shows the connection which subsists between the different truths which are placed within our reach, but proves that it is to a mind well fitted for the discovery and reception of truth in general that the evidences of religion appear the most satisfactory. When an author, for example, who affects to be sceptical about the Divine existence, is also found in the course of his speculations to doubt of his own and about the certainty of mathematical science, it must go far to weaken his authority as a guide in philosophy. Of the competency of the human faculties to attain truth on the most abstruse subjects, we have an experimental proof in the unerring certainty with which we are able to predict the phenomena of the heavens many centuries before they are to happen. And why should we doubt the clear conclusions of our reason in those other inquiries, where, from their nature we have not at present the same opportunity of verifying them by the fact? One thing I may venture to affirm, that, had we not this sensible and palpable confirmation of the certainty of mathema-

tical and astronomical science, it would be difficult to vindicate against the charge of presumption those men who pretend to decide with confidence concerning a part of the universe, apparently so far removed from the examination of our faculties.

Now surely it is no inconsiderable presumption against the reasonableness of a sceptical disposition in religion, that it misleads us also in the other sciences, and, I may add, unfits us for the business of life; whereas just views of religion teach us to think favourably of the human faculties, and both animate and direct us in the search of truth, in whatever inquiries we may happen to engage.

Consider, too, in what state of mind men are chiefly disposed to be sceptical. Is it not when oppressed with low spirits, and when out of humour with themselves and with the world? On the contrary, it is in the most healthful condition of the soul, when external nature smiles around us, when all our faculties are vigorous and active, when we are satisfied with ourselves, and engaged in the service of mankind, that we feel the most sensibly our relation to another state of existence, and, without any long process of reasoning, become as it were *conscious* of the indissoluble and eternal union between happiness and virtue. Perhaps this circumstance by itself would not prove much, but added to those already mentioned it seems to me to have some weight.

The happy influence which the belief of a future state has on the conduct and the enjoyments of mankind also tends to confirm its credibility. This is

so remarkable that it has led some to consider it merely as an invention of *politicians* to preserve the good order of society, and to increase the happiness of human life. But if it be allowed that it *has* this tendency, can it be supposed that the Author of the universe should have left the order and happiness of social life to depend on the belief of a mere chimera, which was in time to vanish before the light of philosophy? Is it not more probable that the enlargement of our knowledge, to which we are so powerfully prompted by the principle of curiosity, will tend to increase, and not to diminish the virtue and the happiness of mankind; and instead of spreading a gloom over nature, and extinguishing the hopes which nature inspires, will gradually unfold to us in the moral world the same order and beauty we admire in the material?

After all that I have urged in proof of a future state, I must again repeat (and the same remark may be extended to the proofs of religion in general) that the evidence which the light of reason affords on the subject is only moral or probable, and by no means of a *demonstrative* nature. But what is the evidence on which we every day act in life? Precisely of the same kind, and often very inferior in degree to that which results from the foregoing considerations. “It ought” (says Dr Butler) “to be forced upon the reflection of sceptical persons, that such is our nature and condition, that they necessarily require us, in the daily course of life, to act upon evidence much lower than what is common-

“ ly called probable ; and that there are numberless
“ instances respecting the common pursuits of life
“ where a man would be thought in a literal sense
“ distracted, who would not act, and with great ap-
“ plication too, not only on an even chance, but on
“ much less, and where the probability was greatly
“ against his succeeding.”

It may perhaps be asked why the evidences of a future state were not made more striking and indubitable ; why human reason was left so much in the dark on a subject so interesting to our happiness ; and why even that revelation which has brought life and immortality to light, has not afforded us a clearer view of the occupations and enjoyments of futurity. To these questions it would be presumptuous to attempt a direct reply. But surely we may be permitted to observe, that the evidences of a future state may be easily conceived to have been so irresistibly strong, and the prospect of our future destination so clearly presented to our view, that the world would no longer have answered the purpose of a state of probation ; nor would the business of life have afforded any object of sufficient magnitude to interest our passions, and call forth our actions.

“ A sense of higher life would only damp

“ The school-boy’s task, and spoil his playful hours :

“ Nor could the child of reason, feeble man,

“ With vigour through this infant being drudge,

“ Did brighter worlds their unimagined bliss

“ Disclosing, dazzle and dissolve his mind.” *

* Thomson’s Liberty.

This idea is illustrated with his usual taste and judgment, and with somewhat more than his usual originality of thought, by Dr Blair, in his discourse on our imperfect knowledge of a future state; and it has been placed in a singularly happy point of view by Bernardin de St Pierre, in his ingenious and eloquent work, entitled *Studies of Nature*.

“ I recollect” (says M. de St Pierre) “ that, on
“ my return to France in a vessel which had been
“ on a voyage to India, as soon as the sailors had
“ perfectly distinguished the land of their native
“ country, they became in a great measure incapable of attending to the business of the ship. Some
“ looked at it wistfully without the power of mind-
“ ing any other object ; others dressed themselves
“ in their best clothes, as if they had been going
“ that moment to disembark ; some talked to them-
“ selves, and others wept. As we approached, the
“ disorder of their minds increased. As they had
“ been absent several years, there was no end to
“ their admiration of the verdure of the hills, of
“ the foliage of the trees, and even of the rocks
“ which skirted the shore covered over with sea-
“ weed and mosses. The church spires of the
“ villages where they were born, which they dis-
“ tingished at a distance up the country, and which
“ they named one after another, filled them with
“ transports of delight. But when the vessel en-
“ tered the port, and when they saw on the quays
“ their friends, their fathers, their mothers, their

“ wives, and their children stretching out their
“ arms to them with tears of joy, and calling them
“ by their names, it was no longer possible to re-
“ tain a single man on board. They all sprang
“ ashore, and it became necessary, according to the
“ custom of the port, to employ another set of ma-
“ riners to bring the vessel to her moorings.

“ What then would be the case were we indulg-
“ ed with a sensible discovery of those regions in-
“ habited by those who are most dear to us, and
“ who alone are worthy of our most sublime affec-
“ tions ? All the laborious and vain solitudes of
“ a present life would come to an end. The exit
“ from this world to the other being in every
“ man’s power, the gulf would be quickly shot ;
“ but nature has involved it in obscurity, and has
“ planted doubt and apprehension to guard the pas-
“ sage.”

After the view which has been given of the principles of natural religion, little remains to be added concerning the duties which respect the Deity. To employ our faculties in studying those evidences of power, of wisdom, and of goodness which he has displayed in his works, as it is the foundation in other instances of our sense of religious obligation, so it is in itself a duty incumbent on us as reasonable and moral beings, capable of recognizing the existence of an Almighty Cause, and of feeling corresponding sentiments of devotion. By those who

entertain just opinions on this subject, the following practical consequences, which comprehend some of the chief effects of religion on the temper and conduct, will be readily admitted as self-evident propositions.

In the *first* place, if the Deity be possessed of infinite moral excellence, we must feel towards him, in an infinite degree, all those affections of love, gratitude, and confidence, which are excited by the imperfect worth we observe among our fellow-creatures ; for it is by conceiving all that is benevolent and amiable in man raised to the highest perfection that we can alone form some faint notion of the Divine Nature. To cultivate, therefore, an habitual love and reverence of the Supreme Being, may be justly considered as the first great branch of morality ; nor is the virtue of that man complete, or even consistent with itself, in whose mind those sentiments of piety are wanting.

Piety seems to be considered by Mr Smith as founded in some degree on those principles of our nature which connect us with our fellow-creatures. The dejection of mind which accompanies a state of complete solitude ; the disposition we have to impart to others our thoughts and feelings ; the desire we have of other intelligent and moral natures to sympathize with our own,—all lead us, in the progress of reason and of moral perception, to establish gradually a mental intercourse with the Invisible Witness and Judge of our Conduct. An habitual sense of the Divine presence comes at last to

be formed. In every object or event that we see we trace the hand of the Almighty, and in the suggestions of reason and conscience we listen to his inspirations. In this intercourse of the heart with God, (an intercourse which enlivens and gladdens the most desolate scenes, and which dignifies the duties of the meanest station,) the supreme felicity of our nature is to be found; and till it is firmly established there remains a void in every breast which nothing earthly can supply;—a consideration which proves that religion has a foundation in the original principles of our constitution, while it affords us a presage of that immortal happiness which providence has destined to be the reward of virtue.

Secondly, Although religion can with no propriety be considered as the sole foundation of morality, yet, when we are convinced that God is infinitely good, and that he is the friend and protector of virtue, this belief affords the most powerful inducements to the practice of every branch of our duty. It leads us to consider conscience as the viceroy of God, and to attend to its suggestions as to the commands of that Being from whom we have received our existence, and the great object of whose government is to promote the happiness and the perfection of his whole creation.

These considerations not only are addressed to our gratitude, but awaken in the mind a sentiment of universal benevolence, and make us feel a relation to every part of the universe. In doing our duty we conceive ourselves as fellow-workers with

the Deity, and as willing instruments in his hands for promoting the benevolent purposes of his administration. This is that sublime sentiment of piety and benevolence which we meet with so often in the writings of the ancient stoics. “ Shall any “ one” (says Antoninus) “ say Oh beloved city of “ Cecrops ! and wilt not thou say, Oh beloved city “ of God ?”

In this manner it appears that a sense of religion is favourable to the practice of virtue in *two* respects ; *first*, by leading us to consider every act of duty as an expression of gratitude to God ; and, *secondly*, as leading us to regard ourselves as parts of that universal system of which he is the Author and Governor. There is another respect in which it is calculated to influence our conduct very powerfully, as it is addressed to our *hopes* and *fears*. In this view religion is a species of authoritative *law* enforced by the most awful sanctions, and of which it is impossible for us by any art to elude the penalties. In the case of the lower orders of men, who are incapable of abstract speculation, and whose moral feelings cannot be supposed to have received much cultivation, it is chiefly this view of religion, as addressed to their *hopes* and *fears*, that secures a faithful discharge of their duties as members of society. In vain would the civil magistrate attempt to preserve the order of society by annexing the penalty of death to heinous offences, if men in general apprehended that there was nothing to be feared beyond the grave. And it is of importance

to remark, that this observation applies with peculiar force to the lower orders, who have commonly much less attachment to life than their superiors. Of this truth all wise legislators, both ancient and modern, have been aware, and have seen the necessity of maintaining a sense of religion among their fellow-citizens as the most powerful of all supports to the political order. “*Ut aliqua in vita formido*” “*improbis esset posita, apud inferos ejusmodi quæ-*” “*dam illi antiqui supplicia impiis constituta esse*” “*voluerunt ; quod videlicet intelligebant his remo-*” “*tis, non esse mortem ipsam pertimescendam.*” *

* Cic. Catil. iv.

With these views it is not surprising that some of the wisest of the heathen writers should have expressed themselves so very strongly concerning the guilt incurred by those who, by exposing to ridicule the fabulous mythology which formed the popular creed among their contemporaries, endangered the authority of those moral principles which were identified with it in the vulgar belief. There is good reason for thinking that the secret communicated to the initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries was the unity of God ; * a truth too sublime to be disclosed at once to the uninformed multitude, as it struck at the root of all those fables which were incorporated with their habits of thinking and feeling on the most important subjects. On this supposition we have a satisfactory explanation of a noted passage in Horace, between which and the preceding lines it seems not easy at first to trace any connection.

Est et fidei tuta silentio

Merces. Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum

Vulgarit arcana, sub iisdem

Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum

Solvat phaselum.

Carm. L. iii. Ode ii.

* Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses. Voyage du jeune Anacharsis.

They, on the other hand, who have laboured to loosen the bands of society, have found it necessary to begin with perverting or destroying the natural sentiments of the mind with respect to a future retribution. In ages where the religious principles of the multitude were too firmly rivetted to be entirely eradicated, they have inculcated theological dogmas subversive of moral distinctions, as in the case of the antinomian teachers during our own civil wars. In other and more recent instances they have avowedly attempted to establish a system of atheism. So true is the old observation, that the extremes of superstition and of infidelity unite in their tendency, and so completely verified are *now* the apprehensions which were expressed eighty years ago by Bishop Butler, that the spirit of irreligion, (which in his time was beginning to grow fashionable among the higher ranks,) might produce some time or other political disorders similar to those which arose from religious fanaticism in the preceding century. *

The transition to these lines from the foregoing ones is certainly by no means obvious.

Virtus, recludens immeritis mori
 Cælum, negatâ tentat iter viâ :
 Cætusque vulgares et udam
 Spernit humum fugiente pennâ.
 Est et fidei, &c. &c. &c.

* “ Is there no danger that all this may raise somewhat like
 “ the levelling spirit upon atheistical principles which, in the
 “ last age, prevailed upon enthusiastic ones? Not to speak of
 “ the possibility that different sorts of people may unite in it

A prediction by a later writer of genius and discernment, and one well acquainted with the principles and manners of the world, is not unworthy of attention in the present times, in which we have seen it very remarkably verified in numberless instances. “ I shall say nothing at present of the
“ lower ranks of mankind. Though they have not
“ yet got into the fashion of laughing at religion,
“ and treating it with scorn and contempt, and I
“ believe are too serious a set of creatures ever to
“ come into it, yet we are not to imagine but that
“ the contempt it is held in by those whose exam-
“ ples they are too apt to imitate, will in time ut-
“ terly shake their principles, and render them, if
“ not as profane, at least as corrupt as their betters.
“ When this event happens, and we begin to feel
“ the effects of it in our dealings with them, *those*
“ *who have done the mischief* will find the necessity
“ at last of turning religious in their own defence,
“ and (for want of a better principle) to set an ex-
“ ample of piety and good morals for their own in-
“ terest and convenience.” *

Nor is it merely in restraining men from grosser outrages that a sense of religion operates as a compulsory law. Without a secret impression (of which it is impossible that the human mind can divest itself) that there is at all times an invisible witness of our thoughts, it is probable that the virtue of the

“ upon these contrary principles ?”—Sermon preached before the House of Lords, January 30, 1740.

* Sterne's Sermons.

best of men would often yield to temptation. Even amidst the darkness of the heathen world Xenophon had recourse to this impression, to account for the inflexible integrity of Socrates, when he sat as one of the judges in the celebrated trial of the naval commanders. “Having taken,” (says Xenophon) “as was customary, the senatorial oath, by which he bound himself to act in all things conformably to the laws, and arriving in his turn to be president of the assembly of the people, he boldly refused to give his suffrage to the iniquitous sentence which condemned the nine captains, being neither intimidated by the menaces of the great, nor the fury of the people, but steadily preferring the sanctity of an oath to the safety of his person. For he was persuaded the gods watched over the affairs of men in a way altogether different from what the vulgar imagined; for while *these* limited their knowledge to *some* particulars only, Socrates, on the contrary, extended it to all, firmly persuaded that they are everywhere present, and that every word, every action, nay, even our most retired deliberations were open to their view.”

In the *last* place, a sense of religion, where it is sincere, will necessarily be attended with a complete resignation of our own will to that of the Deity, as it teaches us to regard every event, even the most afflicting, as calculated to promote beneficent purposes, which we are unable to comprehend, and to promote, finally, the perfection and happiness of our own nature. This is the best, and indeed

the only rational foundation of fortitude. Nay, it may be safely affirmed, (as Socrates long ago observed in the *Phedon* of Plato,) that whoever founds his fortitude on anything else *is only valiant through fear*. In other words, he exposes himself to danger, merely from a regard to the opinion of others, and of consequence wants that internal principle of heroism which can alone arm the mind with patience under those misfortunes which it is condemned to bear in solitude, or under sorrows which prudence conceals from the public eye. But to the man who believes that everything is ordered for the best, and that his existence and happiness are in the hands of a Being who watches over him with the care of a parent, the difficulties and dangers of life only serve to call forth the latent powers of the soul, by reminding him of the prize for which he combats, and of that beneficent Providence by which the conflict was appointed.

Safe in the hands of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal or the mortal hour.

The view which I have given of *religion* as forming the first and chief branch of moral duty, and as contributing in its turn most powerfully to promote the practice of every virtue, is equally consonant to the spirit of the Sacred Writings, and to the most obvious dictates of reason and conscience ; and accordingly it is sanctioned by the authority of all those philosophers of antiquity who devoted their talents to the improvement and happiness of man-

kind. "It should never be thought" (says Plato in one of his Dialogues) "that there is any branch of human virtue of greater importance than piety towards the Deity." The chief article of the *Unwritten Law* mentioned by Socrates * is, "that the gods ought to be worshipped."—"This" (he says) "is acknowledged everywhere, and received by all men as the first command." And to the same purpose Cicero, in the first book of his *Offices*, places in the first rank of duties those we owe to the Immortal Gods. "In ipsa communitate sunt gradus officiorum ex quibus, quid cuique præstet, intelligi possit: ut primà Diis immortalibus; secunda, patriæ; tertia parentibus, deinceps gradatim reliquis debeantur."†

The elevation of mind which some of the most illustrious characters of antiquity derived from their religious principles, however imperfect and erroneous, and the weight which these principles gave them in their public and political capacity, are remarked by many ancient writers; and such, I apprehend, will be always found to be the case when the personal importance of the individual rests on the basis of public opinion. "But he" (says Plutarch) "who was most conversant with Pericles, and most contributed to give him a grandeur of mind, and to make his high spirit for governing the popular assemblies more weighty and authoritative; in a word, who exalted his ideas and raised at the same time the dignity of his demean-

* Xen. Memor. L. iv. c. 4.

† Lib. i. c. ult.

“ our: The person who did this was Anaxagoras the
 “ Clazomenian, whom the people of that age reve-
 “ renced as the first who made *mind* or *intellect* (in
 “ opposition to *chance*) a principle in the formation
 “ and government of the universe.”

The extraordinary respect which the Romans, during their period of greatest glory, entertained for religion (false as their own system was in its mythological foundations, and erroneous in many of its practical tendencies,) has been often taken notice of as one of the principal sources of their private and public virtues. “ The Spaniards” (says Cicero) “ exceed us in numbers; the Gauls in the
 “ glory of war; but we surpass all nations in that
 “ wisdom by which we have learned that all
 “ things are governed and directed by the immor-
 “ tal gods.” *

In the later periods of their history this reverence for religion, together with the other virtues which gave them the empire of the world, was in a great measure lost; and we continually find their orators and historians drawing a melancholy contrast between the degeneracy of their manners and those of their ancestors. In the account which Livy has given of the consulate of Q. Cincinnatus, he mentions an attempt which the tribunes made to persuade the people that they were not bound by

* “ Sed pietate ac religione, atque hac una sapientia, quod
 “ Deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernarique per-
 “ speximus, omnes gentes nationesque superavimus.”—Orat.
 de Haruspicum Responsis, c. ix.

their military oath to follow the consul to the field, because they had taken that oath when he was a private man. But, however agreeable this doctrine might be to their inclinations, and however strongly recommended to them by the sanction of their own popular magistrates, we find that their reverence for the religion of an oath led them to treat the doctrine as nothing better than a cavil. Livy's reflection on this occasion is remarkable. "Non-
 "dum hæc, quæ nunc tenet seculum, negligentia
 "Deûm venerat: nec interpretando sibi quisque
 "jusjurandum leges aptas faciebat, sed suos potius
 "mores ad ea accommodabat." *

How completely the sense of religion was afterwards extinguished among the same people, and how intimately *this* change in their character was connected with that political profligacy which ended in the ruin of the commonwealth, may be collected from many passages in the writings of Cicero. "Nunquam audiivi in Epicuri Schola Lycurgum,
 "Solonem, Miltiadem, Themistoclem, Epaminon-
 "dam, nominari; qui in ore sunt ceterorum om-
 "nium philosophorum." † In his own times he tells us "that the portrait of Epicurus was not
 "only a common article of furniture in their *houses*,
 "but that it formed a common ornament to their
 "rings and vases."—"Nec tamen Epicuri licet ob-
 "livisci, si cupiam: cujus imaginem non modo in
 "tabulis nostri familiares, sed etiam in poculis et in
 "annulis habent." ‡

* Lib. iii. cap. 20. + De Fin. ii. c. 21. ‡ Ibid. Lib. v. c. 1.

A review of the political conduct of the distinguished men who appeared at this period, and a comparison of the parts which they acted with the philosophical principles they professed, furnishes an instructive comment on these observations ; and goes far to warrant the general inference, that wherever the same pernicious philosophy extends its influence widely among the great body of a people, men are unfitted to enjoy the blessings of rational freedom, and are prepared either to run into the excesses of democratical anarchy, or (what is the natural and inevitable consequences of such excesses) to submit quietly to the yoke of a despotic master.

This last observation I shall have occasion to illustrate afterwards when I come to contrast the practical tendency of the school of Epicurus with that of Zeno.

BOOK FOURTH.

OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT OUR FELLOW-
CREATURES.

UNDER this title it is not proposed to give a complete enumeration of our social duties, but only to point out some of the most important, chiefly with a view to show the imperfections of those systems of morals which attempt to resolve the whole of virtue into one particular principle. Among these, that which resolves virtue into benevolence is undoubtedly the most amiable; but even this system will appear, from the following remarks, to be not only inconsistent with truth, but to lead to dangerous consequences.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OF BENEVOLENCE.

BENEFICENCE is so important a branch of virtue that it has been supposed by some moralists to constitute the whole of it. According to these writers good will to mankind is the only *immediate* object of moral approbation ; and the obligation of all our other moral duties arises entirely from their apprehended tendency to promote the happiness of society.

Among the most eminent partisans of this system in modern times, Mr Smith mentions particularly Dr Ralph Cudworth, Dr Henry More, and Mr John Smith of Cambridge ; “ but of all its patrons,” he observes, “ ancient or modern, Dr Francis Hutcheson was undoubtedly beyond all comparison “ the most acute, the most distinct, the most philosophical, and what is of the greatest consequence “ of all, the soberest and most judicious.” *

In favour of this system Mr Smith acknowledges that there are many appearances in human nature

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Part vii. Sect. ii. 6th edit.

which at first sight seem strongly to support it, and of some of these appearances Dr Hutcheson avails himself with much acuteness and plausibility. *1st*, Whenever in any action, supposed to proceed from benevolent affections, some other motive is discovered, our sense of the merit of this action is just so far diminished as this motive is believed to have influenced it. *2d*, When those actions, on the contrary, which are commonly supposed to proceed from a selfish motive are discovered to have arisen from a benevolent one, it generally enhances our sense of their merit. Lastly, it was urged by Dr Hutcheson, that in all casuistical disputes concerning the rectitude of conduct, the ultimate appeal is uniformly made to utility. In the later debates, for example, about passive obedience and the right of resistance, the sole point in controversy among men of sense was, whether universal submission would probably be attended with greater evils than temporary insurrections when privileges were invaded. Whether what, upon the whole, tended most to the happiness of mankind was not also morally good, was never once made a question.

Since benevolence, therefore, was the only motive which could bestow upon any action the character of virtue, the greater the benevolence which was evidenced by any action, the greater the praise which must belong to it.

Indirecting all our actions to promote the greatest possible good,—in submitting all inferior affections to the desire of the general happiness of mankind,—in regarding one's-self as but one of the many whose

prosperity was to be pursued no farther than it was consistent with, or conducive to that of the whole, consisted the perfection of virtue.

Dr Hutcheson held farther, that self-love was a principle which could never be virtuous in any degree or in any direction. This maxim he carried so far as to assert, that even a regard to the pleasure of self-approbation, to the comfortable applauses of our own consciences, diminishes the merit of a benevolent action. “In the common judgments of mankind, however,” says Mr Smith, “this regard to the approbation of our own minds is so far from being considered as what can in any respect diminish the virtue of any action, that it is rather looked upon as the sole motive which deserves the appellation of virtuous.”

Of the truth and correctness of these principles Dr Hutcheson was so fully convinced, that, in conformity to them, he has offered some algebraical formulas for computing mathematically the morality of actions. Of this very extraordinary attempt the following axioms which he premises to his formulas may serve as a sufficient specimen.

1. The *moral importance* of any agent, or the quantity of public good produced by him, is in a compound ratio of his benevolence and abilities, or M (moment of good) $= B \times A$.

2. In like manner the moment of private good or interest produced by any person to himself is in a compound ratio of his self-love and ability, or $I = S \times A$.

3. When in comparing the virtue of two agents the abilities are equal, the moment of public good produced by them in like circumstances is as the benevolence, or $M = B \times 1$.

4. When benevolence in two agents is equal, and other circumstances alike, the moment of public good is as the abilities, or $M = A \times 1$.

5. The virtue, then, of agents, or their benevolence, is always directly as the moment of good produced in like circumstances, and inversely as their abilities, or $B = \frac{M}{A}$.

As Dr Hutcheson's example in the use of these formulas has not been followed by any of his successors, it is unnecessary to employ any arguments to expose the absurdity of this unsuccessful innovation in the usual language of ethics.* It is of more consequence to direct our attention to the substance of the doctrine which it was the great object of the ingenious author to establish.

And, in the first place, the necessary and obvious consequences to which this account of virtue leads seem to furnish a satisfactory proof of its unsoundness. For if the merit of an action depends on no other circumstance than the quantity of good intended by the agent, then the rectitude of an action can in no case be influenced by the mutual relations of the parties; a conclusion contradicted by the uni-

* Dr Hutcheson's attempt to introduce the language of mathematics into morals gave occasion to a valuable Essay on Proper and Improper Quantity by the late Dr Reid. This essay may be found in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London for the year 1748.

versal judgment of mankind in favour of the paramount obligation of various other duties. It is sufficient to mention the obligations of gratitude, of veracity, and of justice.* Unless we admit these duties to be *immediately* obligatory, we must admit the maxim, that a good end may sanctify any means necessary for its attainment; or, in other words, that it would be lawful for us to dispense with the obligations of veracity and justice whenever, by doing so, we had a prospect of promoting any of the essential interests of society.

With respect to this maxim I would only ask, is it probable *a priori*, that the wise and Beneficent Author of the Universe should have left the conduct of such a fallible and short-sighted creature as man to be regulated by no other principle than the private opinion of each individual with respect to the expediency of his actions? Or, in other words, by the conjectures which the individual might form on the good or evil resulting, *on the whole*, from an endless train of future contingencies? Were this the case, the opinions of mankind concerning the rules of morality would be as various as their judgments concerning the probable issue of the most doubtful and difficult determination in politics. Numberless cases might be fancied in which a person would not only *claim* merit to himself, but actually possess it, in consequence of actions which are generally regarded with indignation and abhor-

* See Butler's Essay on the Nature of Virtue, at the end of his Analogy.

rence. Even men of the soundest judgment and most penetrating sagacity might frequently be led to the perpetration of enormities, if they had no other standard of right and wrong but what they derived from their own uncertain anticipations of futurity. And when we consider how small the number of such men is, in comparison of those whose understandings are perverted by the prejudices of education, and by their own selfish passions, it is easy to see what a scene of anarchy the world would become. Surely if the Deity intended the happiness of his creatures, he would not build the *order* (I may say the *existence*) of society on so precarious a foundation. And here it deserves particularly to be mentioned, that one of the arguments commonly produced in support of the scheme is drawn from the benevolence of God. Benevolence, we are told, induced the Deity to call the universe into existence, and benevolence is the great law of his government: and as virtue in man must consist in conformity to the will of God, in imitating his moral perfections to the utmost of our power, it is concluded that virtue and benevolence are the same. But the premises here lead to a conclusion directly opposite; for if the happiness of mankind be the great end for which they are brought into being, it is presumable that the rules of their conduct are of such a nature as to be obvious to the capacities of all men of sincere and well-disposed minds. Accordingly we find, (and the fact is in a peculiar degree worthy of attention), that while the

theory of ethics involves some of the most abstruse questions which have ever employed the human faculties, the moral judgments and moral feelings of the most distant ages and nations, with respect to all the most essential duties of life, are one and the same. *

The reasonableness of the foregoing conclusion will be much confirmed if we consider how much the happiness of mankind is often left to depend on the will of one or of a few individuals. The best men in such circumstances, when invested with absolute power, might be rendered curses to the world by sanguine plans of beneficence; and the ambitious and designing would be supplied with specious pretences to justify the most cruel and tyrannical measures. In truth, it is this very plea of benevolent intention which has been employed to palliate, or rather to sanctify, the conduct of the greatest scourges of the human race. It is this very plea which in former times lighted up the fires of the Inquisition; and which in our own age has furnished a pretence for outrages against all the principles of justice and all the feelings of humanity.

These arguments are urged with great ingenuity, and with irresistible force of reasoning, by Mr Gisborne, in his remarks on Dr Paley's scheme of morals.

It may perhaps be urged that a regard to utility would lead to an *invariable* adherence to the rules

* "Si quid rectissimum sit quærimus, perspicuum est. Si quid maximè expediat, obscurum."—Cic. Ep. ad Fam. iv. 2.

of veracity, gratitude, and justice ; because in this way more good is produced on the whole than could be obtained by any occasional deviations from them ; that it is this idea of utility which first leads us to approve of these virtues ; and that afterwards habit, or the association of ideas, makes us observe their rules without thinking of consequences. But is not this to adopt that mode of reasoning which Hutcheson censures so severely in the selfish philosophers ? According to them we labour to promote the public prosperity, because we believe our own to be intimately connected with it. They acknowledge, at the same time, that we often make a real sacrifice of private to public advantage, and that we often exert ourselves in the public service without once thinking of our own interest. But all this they explain by habits and associations, which operate in this case as they do in the case of the miser, who, although his attachment to money was originally founded on the consideration of its uses, yet continues to accumulate wealth without once thinking of the ends to which it is subservient, and indeed long after he is able to enjoy those comforts which it can purchase.

Now the fallaciousness of this mode of reasoning has been pointed out by Dr Hutcheson with great clearness and force ; and the arguments he employs against it may with great justice be turned against himself. In general the safest rule we can follow in our inquiries concerning the principles of human conduct is to acquiesce, in the first instance, in the

plain and obvious appearance of facts ; and if these conclusions are inaccurate, to correct them gradually in proportion as a more attentive examination of our subject discovers to us the prejudices which education and accidental associations have blended with the truth. It is at least a presumption in favour of any system concerning the mind, that it falls in with the natural apprehensions of mankind in all countries and ages ;—and I believe it will commonly be found that these are the systems which, in the progress of human reason, are justified by the most profound and enlightened philosophy. I state this observation with the greater confidence, as it coincides with the following admirable remark of Mr Hume,—an author who had certainly no interest in inculcating such a doctrine, as he seems to have paid very little attention to it in the course of his own speculations.

“ The case is not the same in moral philosophy
“ as in physics. Many an hypothesis in nature,
“ contrary to first appearances, has been found, on
“ more accurate scrutiny, solid and satisfactory.
“ Instances of this kind are so frequent that a judi-
“ cious as well as witty philosopher* has ventured
“ to affirm, if there be more than one way in which
“ a phenomenon may be produced, that there is a
“ general presumption for its arising from the
“ causes which are the least obvious and familiar.
“ But the presumption always lies on the other side
“ in all inquiries concerning the origin of our pas-

* Fontenelle.

“ sions, and of the internal operations of the human
“ mind. The simplest and most obvious cause
“ which can there be assigned for any phenomenon
“ is probably the true one. When a philosopher, in
“ the explication of his system, is obliged to have
“ recourse to some very intricate and refined reflec-
“ tions, and to suppose them essential to the pro-
“ duction of any passion or emotion, we have reason
“ to be extremely on our guard against so fallacious
“ an hypothesis. The affections are not susceptible
“ of any impression from the refinements of reason
“ or imagination ; and it is always found that a vi-
“ gorous exertion of the latter faculty necessarily,
“ from the limited capacity of the human mind, de-
“ stroys all activity in the former. Our predomi-
“ nant motive or interest is indeed frequently con-
“ cealed from ourselves when it is mingled and con-
“ founded with other motives which the mind, from
“ vanity and self-conceit, is desirous of supposing
“ more prevalent ; but there is no instance that a
“ concealment of this nature has ever arisen from
“ the abstruseness and intricacy of the motive. A
“ man that has lost a friend and patron may flatter
“ himself that all his grief arises from generous sen-
“ timents, without any mixture of narrow or inte-
“ rested considerations ; but a man that grieves for
“ a valuable friend who needed his patronage and
“ protection, how can we suppose that his passion-
“ ate tenderness arises from some metaphysical re-
“ gards to a self-interest which has no foundation
“ in reality ? We may as well imagine that minute

“ wheels and springs, like those of a watch, give
“ motion to a waggon, as account for the origin of
“ passion from such abstruse reflections.”

In this passage Mr Hume has censured very justly the theories which resolve the whole of human conduct into self-love, and I apprehend that the same censure may be extended to that more amiable system which supposes our approbation of justice and veracity, and all our other duties, to arise from their apprehended tendency to promote the happiness of society.

But although it is not any views of utility which originally lead us to approve of veracity and justice, yet it must be acknowledged, that, when a philosopher has once satisfied himself with respect to their real tendency, this consideration strengthens very much his sense of their obligation. And he may sometimes find it necessary to call this consideration to his aid when he is in danger of departing from general rules ; as in the case of a judge who is in danger of yielding to the impulse of compassion, till he opposes to it another benevolent affection of a more extensive nature, by reflecting on the *expediency* of adhering to the general rules of justice.

That the practice of veracity and justice, and of all our other duties, is useful to mankind, is acknowledged by moralists of all descriptions ; and there is good reason for believing, that, if a person saw all the consequences of his actions, he would perceive that an adherence to their rules is useful and advantage-

ous on the whole, even in those cases in which his limited views incline him to think otherwise. The same observation may be applied to *self-interest*, that the most effectual way of promoting it is to observe religiously the obligations of morality ; and these are both very striking instances of that unity of design which is conspicuous both in the moral and natural world. This makes it an easy matter for a philosopher to give a plausible explanation of all our duties from one principle, because the *general tendency* of all of them is to determine us to the same course of life. That benevolence *may be* the sole principle of action in the Deity is possible, (although when we affirm that *it is so* we go beyond our depth ;) but the case is obviously very different with mankind. If the hypothesis be just with respect to the Deity, we must suppose that he enjoined the duties of veracity and justice, not on account of their intrinsic rectitude, but of their utility. But still with respect to man they are indispensable laws, for he has an immediate perception of their rectitude. And indeed if he had not, but were left to deduce their rectitude from the consequences which they have a tendency to produce, we may venture to affirm that there would not be enough of virtue left in the world to hold society together.

It is remarked by Mr Smith in a passage formerly quoted, and which cannot be too frequently recalled to the reader's attention, that " although, " in accounting for the operations of bodies, we never " fail to distinguish the efficient from the final cause,

“ in accounting for those of the mind we are very
“ apt to confound these two different things with
“ one another. When by natural principles we
“ are led to advance those ends which a refined and enlightened reason would recommend to
“ us, we are very apt to impute to that reason, as
“ to their efficient cause, the sentiments and actions
“ by which we advance those ends, and to imagine
“ that to be the wisdom of man which in reality is
“ the wisdom of God. Upon a superficial view
“ this cause seems sufficient to produce the effects
“ which are ascribed to it, and the system of human nature seems to be more simple and agreeable when all its different operations are in this
“ manner deduced from a single principle.”

The remarks which I have now made with respect to Dr Hutcheson's philosophy are applicable, with some slight alterations, to a considerable variety of moral systems which have been offered to the world under very different forms; but which agree with each other in deriving the practical rules of virtuous conduct from considerations of utility. All of these systems are but modifications of the old doctrine which resolves the whole of virtue into benevolence.

This theory of utility (which is of a very ancient date, and which in modern times has derived much celebrity from the genius of Mr Hume) has been revived more recently by Mr Godwin, and by the late Dr Paley. Widely as these two writers differ in the *source* whence they derive their rule of con-

duct, and the *sanctions* by which they enforce its observance, they are perfectly agreed about its paramount authority over every other principle of action. “Whatever is *expedient*” (says Dr Paley) “is *right*. It is the utility of any moral rule alone “which constitutes the obligation of it.” *.....
 “But then, it must be expedient *on the whole*, at “the long run, in all its effects, collateral and remote, as well as those which are immediate and “direct, as it is obvious that, in computing consequences, it makes no difference in what way or “at what distance they ensue.” † Mr Godwin has no where expressed himself on this fundamental question of practical ethics in terms more decided and unqualified.

The observations quoted from Mr Smith on the proneness of the mind, in moral speculations, to

* Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 70. Fifth Edition.

† Ibid, p. 78.

In another part of this work Dr Paley explicitly asserts that *every* moral rule is liable to be superseded in particular cases on the ground of expediency. “Moral philosophy cannot “pronounce that any rule of morality is so rigid as to bend to “no exceptions; nor, on the other hand, can she comprise these “exceptions within any previous description. She confesses “that the obligation of every law depends upon its ultimate “utility; that this utility having a finite and determinate value, situations may be feigned, and consequently may possibly arise, in which the general tendency is outweighed by “the enormity of the particular mischief; and of course where “ultimate utility renders it as much an act of duty to break “the rule as it is on other occasions to observe it.”—Vol. II. p. 411.

confound together efficient and final causes, furnish a key to the chief difficulty by which the patrons of this specious but very dangerous system have been misled.

Of this theory of utility, so strongly recommended to some by the powerful talents of Hume, and to others by the well-merited popularity of Paley, the most satisfactory of all refutations is to be found in the work of Mr Godwin. It is unnecessary to inquire how far the practical lessons he has inculcated are logically inferred from his fundamental principle ; for although I apprehend much might be objected to these, even on his own hypothesis, yet if such be the conclusions to which, in the judgment of so acute a reasoner, it *appeared* to lead with demonstrative evidence, nothing further is requisite to illustrate the practical tendency of a system, which, absolving men from the obligations imposed on them with so commanding an authority by the moral constitution of human nature, abandons every individual to the guidance of his own narrow views concerning the complicated interests of political society. *

* It is remarkable that Mr Hume, by far the ablest advocate for the theory in question, has indirectly acknowledged its inconsistency with some of the most important facts which it professes to explain. “ Though the *heart*” (he observes in the fifth section of his Inquiry concerning Morals) “ takes no part entirely with those general notions, nor regulates all its love and hatred by the universal abstract differences of vice and virtue, without regard to self, and the persons with

Among the practical consequences which Dr Paley deduces from the same principle there are some which to my mind are not less revolting than those of Mr Godwin. Such, for example, is the argument by which he controverts the received maxim of criminal jurisprudence, that *it is better for ten guilty persons to escape than for one innocent man to suffer*. But on this subject I need not enlarge. The sophistry, and, I am sorry to add, the reckless inhumanity displayed in this part of Paley's work, have been triumphantly exposed by that great and good man Sir Samuel Romilly ;—a man whom, long before his talents and worth were known to the

“ whom we are more intimately connected, yet have these
 “ moral differences a considerable influence, and being suffi-
 “ cient at least for discourse, serve all the purposes in com-
 “ pany, in the theatre, and in the schools.” On this passage the following very curious note is to be found at the end of the volume ; a note (by the way) which deserves to be added to the other proofs already given of the irresistible influence which the doctrine of final causes occasionally exercises over the most sceptical minds. “ *It is wisely ordained by nature,*
 “ that private connections should *commonly* prevail over uni-
 “ versal views and considerations, otherwise our affections and
 “ actions would be dissipated and lost for want of a proper
 “ limited object.” Does not this remark imply an acknowledgment, *first*, That the principle of general expediency (the *sole* principle of virtuous conduct, according to Mr Hume, in our most important transactions with our fellow-creatures) would not contribute to the happiness of society if men should *commonly* act upon it ; and *secondly*, That some provision is made in our moral constitution that we shall, in fact, be influenced by other motives in discharging the offices of private life ?

public, I admired and loved, and whose memory I shall never cease to revere. *

From this digression, (if it can be called a digression,) with respect to the modern doctrine of utility, I return to Dr Hutcheson's scheme of benevolence, by which the theory of Mr Hume was plainly suggested, and to which all the more modern modifications of the same principle may be traced. Indeed, the theory of utility must tacitly take for granted the scheme of benevolence, in order to be complete and consistent. For whence the obligation to consult general utility but from the peculiar approbation with which the duty of benevolence is regarded?

To the strictures already offered on Hutcheson's writings I have only to add, that he seems to consider virtue as a quality of our *affections*, whereas it is really a quality of our *actions*; or (perhaps in strict propriety) of those *dispositions* from which our actions immediately proceed. Our benevolent affections are always amiable, but, in so far as they are constitutional, they are certainly in no respect meritorious. Indeed some of them are common to us with the brutes. When they are possessed in an eminent degree, we may perhaps consider them as a ground of moral esteem, because they indicate the pains which has been bestowed on their cultivation, and a course of active virtue in which they have been

* Observations on the Criminal Law of England as it relates to Capital Punishments, and on the way in which it is administered. Printed for Cadell and Davies, 1810. See in particular Note D.

exercised and strengthened. On the contrary, a person who wants them is always an object of horror ; *chiefly* because we know they are only to be eradicated by long habits of profligacy, and *partly* in consequence of the uneasiness we feel when we see the ordinary course of nature violated, as in a monstrous animal production. It is from these two facts that the plausibility of Dr Hutcheson's language on this subject in a great measure arises ; but if the facts be accurately examined, they will be found perfectly consistent with the doctrine already laid down, that nothing is an object of moral praise or blame but what depends on our own voluntary exertions ; and of consequence, that these terms are not applicable to our benevolent or malevolent affections, so far as we suppose them to result necessarily from our constitutional frame.

There is another consideration, too, which, on a superficial view, appears favourable both to Hutcheson's language and system,—the peculiar and enthusiastic admiration with which all mankind regard a man of enlightened and active benevolence. Such a character draws upon itself not merely the *applauses* but the *blessings* of the world, and assimilates human nature to what we conceive of those ministering angels who are the immediate instruments of the Divine goodness and mercy.

In order to think with accuracy on this very important point of morals, it is necessary to distinguish those benevolent affections which urge us to their respective objects by a blind impulse, from that

rational and enlightened benevolence which interests us in the happiness of all mankind, and indeed of all the orders of sensitive being. This Divine principle of action appears but little in the bulk of our species ; for although the seeds of it are sown in every breast, it requires long and careful cultivation to rear them to maturity, choked as they are by envy, by jealousy, by selfishness, and by those contracted views which originate in unenlightened schemes of human policy. Clear away these noxious weeds, and the genuine benevolence of the human heart will appear in all its beauty. No wonder, then, that we should regard, with such peculiar sentiments of veneration, the character of one whom we consider as the sincere and unwearied friend of humanity ; for such a character implies the existence of all the other virtues, more particularly of candid and *just* dispositions towards our fellow-creatures, and implies, moreover, a long course of persevering exertion in combating prejudice, and in eradicating narrow and malignant passions. The gratitude, besides, which all men must feel towards one in whose benevolent wishes they know themselves to be comprehended, contributes to enliven the former sentiment of moral esteem ; and both together throw so peculiar a lustre on this branch of duty as goes far to account for the origin of those systems which represent it as the only direct object of moral approbation.

But what I am chiefly anxious to infer at present from these remarks is, that there is nothing in

this approbation of a rational and enlightened benevolence which at all invalidates the doctrine, that virtue, in all its branches, supposes a course of voluntary exertion under the guidance of a sense of *duty*.

It may be worth while to add, before leaving the subject, that, when a rational and habitual benevolence forms part of a character, it will render the conduct perfectly uniform, and will exclude the possibility of those inconsistencies that are frequently observable in individuals who give themselves up to the guidance of particular affections, either private or public. How often, for example, do we meet with individuals who have great pretensions to public spirit and even to humanity, on important occasions, who affect an habitual rudeness in the common intercourse of society ! The public spirit of such men cannot possibly arise from genuine benevolence, otherwise the same principle of action would extend to every different part of the conduct by which the comfort of other men is affected ; and in the case of most individuals, the addition they are able to make to human happiness, by the constant exercise of courtesy and gentleness to all who are within the sphere of their influence, is of far greater amount than all that can result from the more splendid and heroic exertions of their beneficence. A similar remark may be applied to such as are possessed of strong private attachments and of humanity to objects in distress, while they have no idea of public spirit ; and also to those who lay

claim to a more than common portion of patriotic zeal, while they avow a contempt for the general interests of humanity. In truth, all those offices, whether apparently trifling or important, which contribute to augment the happiness of our fellow-creatures,—civility, gentleness, kindness, humanity, patriotism, universal benevolence,—are only diversified expressions of the same disposition, according to the circumstances in which it operates, and the relation which the agent bears to others.

CHAPTER SECOND.

OF JUSTICE.

THE word justice, in its most extensive signification, denotes that disposition which leads us, in cases where our own temper, or passions, or interest, are concerned, to determine and to act without being biassed by partial considerations.

I had occasion formerly to observe, that a desire of our own happiness is inseparable from our nature as sensitive and rational beings ; or, in other words, that it is impossible to conceive a being capable of forming the ideas of happiness and misery, to whom the one shall not be an object of desire and the other of aversion. On the other hand, it is no less evident that this desire is a principle belonging to such beings *exclusively* ; inasmuch as the very idea of *happiness*, or of *what is good for man on the whole*, presupposes the exercise of *reason* in the mind which is able to perform it ; and as it is only a being possessed of the power of *self-government* which can pursue steadily this abstract conception, in opposition to the solicitations of pre-

sent appetite and passion. This *rational self-love* (or in other words, this regard to what is good for us on the whole,) is analogous, in some important respects, to that *calm benevolence* which has been already illustrated. They are both characteristical endowments of a rational nature, and they both exert an influence over the conduct in proportion as reason gains an ascendant over prejudice and error, and over those appetites which are common to us and to the brutes.

The inferior principles of action in our nature have all a manifest reference to one or other of these rational principles ; for, although they operate without any reflection on our part, they all lead to ends beneficial to the individual or to society. Of this kind are hunger, thirst, the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, pity to the distressed, natural affection, and a variety of others. Upon the whole, these two great principles of action, *self-love* and *benevolence*, coincide wonderfully in recommending one and the same course of conduct ; and we have great reason to believe, that, if we were acquainted with all the remote consequences of our actions, they would be found to coincide entirely. There are, however, cases in which there *seems* to be an interference between them ; and in such cases the generality of mankind are apt to be influenced more than they ought to be by self-love and the principles which are subsidiary to it. These sometimes lead them to act in direct opposition to their sense of duty ; but much more frequently they influence

the conduct by suggesting to the judgment partial and erroneous views of circumstances ; and by persuading men that the line of their duty coincides with that which is prescribed by interest and inclination. Of all this every man capable of reflection must soon be convinced from experience, and he will study to correct his judgment in cases in which he himself is a party,—either by recollecting the judgments he has formerly passed in similar circumstances on the conduct of others, or by stating cases to himself in which his own interest and predilections are perfectly left out of the question. Now, I use the word *justice* to express that disposition of mind which leads a man, where his own interest or passions are concerned, to determine and to act according to those judgments which he would have formed of the conduct of another placed in a similar situation.

But although I believe that expedients of this sort are necessary to the best of men for correcting their moral judgments in cases in which they themselves are parties, it will not therefore follow, (as I have already observed,*) that our *only* ideas of right and wrong with respect to our own conduct are derived from our sentiments with respect to the conduct of others. “ The intention of such expedients is merely to obtain a just and fair view of “ circumstances ; and after this view has been ob-

* Vol. I. pp. 312, 313, 314. These paragraphs are transcribed here for the sake of connection.

“ tained, the question still remains, what constitutes
“ the obligation upon us to act in a particular man-
“ ner. It may be said, that, from recollecting my
“ own judgments in similar cases in which I was
“ concerned, I infer in what light my conduct
“ will appear to society ;—that there is an exquisite
“ pleasure annexed to mutual sympathy, and that in
“ order to obtain it, in order that other men may go
“ along with my conduct, I accommodate it not to
“ my own feelings but to their judgment. Now
“ I acknowledge that this may account for a man’s
“ *assuming* the appearance of virtue, and I believe
“ that something of this sort is the real foundation
“ of the *rules of good breeding in polished society* ;
“ but in the important concerns of life I apprehend
“ there is something more ; for when I have once
“ satisfied myself with respect to the conduct which
“ an impartial judge would approve of, I feel that
“ this conduct is *right* for me, and that I am under
“ a moral obligation to put it in practice. If I had
“ had recourse to no expedient for correcting my
“ first judgment, I would still have formed some
“ judgment or other of a particular conduct, as
“ right, wrong, or indifferent, and the only diffe-
“ rence would have been, that I should probably
“ have decided improperly from a false or a partial
“ view of the case.

“ From these observations I conclude, that the
“ words *right, wrong, ought*, and *ought not*, express
“ simple ideas, of which no explanation can be given.
“ They are to be found in all languages, and it is

“ impossible to carry on any moral speculation with-
“ out them. Even those authors who have rejected
“ the supposition of a *moral faculty*, and who at-
“ tempt to account for all our moral sentiments by
“ certain modifications of sympathy, find it impos-
“ sible to avoid the use of these words. Thus when
“ it is acknowledged that the propriety of action
“ cannot be determined in all cases by the *actual*
“ judgment of society, and that in such cases we
“ must act according to the judgments which they
“ *ought* to have formed, is not this to own that we
“ have a standard of right and wrong in our own
“ minds, to which we find it of more consequence
“ to adjust our conduct than to obtain the sympa-
“ thy of other men ?”

I must however remark, in order to prevent mis-
apprehensions, that, if any person objects to the ex-
pressions *moral sense* or *moral faculty*, I do not
take upon me to defend their propriety. I use
them because they are commonly employed by ethi-
cal writers of late, and because I do not think them
liable to misinterpretation after the explanation of
them I formerly gave. I certainly do not consider
them as expressing an implanted relish for certain
qualities of actions analogous to our relish for cer-
tain tastes and smells. All I contend for is, that
the words right and wrong, ought and ought not,
express simple ideas ; that our perception of
these qualities in certain actions is an ultimate fact
of our nature ; and that this perception always im-
plies the idea of moral obligation. When I speak

of a moral sense or a moral faculty, I mean merely to express the power we have of forming these ideas ; but I do not suppose that this bears any more analogy to our external senses than the power we have of forming the simple ideas of *number*, of *time*, or of *causation*, which all arise in the mind, we cannot tell how, when certain objects or certain events are perceived by the understanding. If those ideas were as important as those of right and wrong, or had been as much under the review of philosophers, we might perhaps have had a *sense of time*, a *sense of number*, and a *sense of causation*. And in fact something very like this language occurs in the writings of Lord Kames.

It is observed by Mr Smith, as an argument against the existence of a moral sense or moral faculty, that these words are of very recent origin, and that it must appear very strange that a principle, which Providence undoubtedly intended to be the governing one of human nature, should hitherto have been so little taken notice of as not to have got a name in any language. If this observation is levelled merely at these two expressions, I have already said that I do not mean to defend them ; but if it is to be understood as implying that the words right and wrong, ought and ought not, do not express simple ideas, I must take the liberty of remarking, in opposition to it, that, although the words moral sense and moral faculty are of late origin, this is by no means the case with the word *conscience*. It is indeed said that this word (*con-*

science) “ does not immediately denote any moral faculty by which we approve or disapprove ;—that it supposes indeed the existence of some such faculty, but that it properly signifies our consciousness of having acted agreeably or contrary to its directions.”* But the truth I take to be this, that the word conscience coincides exactly with the moral faculty, with this difference only, that the former refers to our own conduct alone, whereas the latter is meant to express also the power by which we approve or disapprove of the conduct of others. Now if this be granted, and if it be allowed that the former word is to be found in all languages, and that the latter is only a modern invention, is it not a natural inference, that our judgments, with respect to our own conduct, are not merely applications to ourselves of those we have previously formed with respect to the conduct of our fellow-creatures? †

I have taken this opportunity of making a few additional remarks on Mr Smith’s theory, because it is the virtue of justice which furnishes the most plausible illustrations in support of it. But although I do not think it accounts for the ori-

* Smith’s Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. p. 355. Sixth Edition.

† Mr Smith (as I formerly hinted) was probably led at first into this train of thinking by his predecessor and preceptor, Dr Hutcheson, according to whom the words *ought* and *obligation* are too *confused* to be admitted into philosophical discussions. “ As to that confused word (*ought*) it is needless to apply to it again all that was said about *obligation*.”—Illustrations of the Moral Sense, end of sec. i.

gin of our ideas of right and wrong and of moral obligation, I acknowledge that it throws much light on the means which nature has suggested to us for correcting our moral judgments, and has led to the observation of some very important facts with respect to a part of our constitution which had formerly almost entirely escaped the notice of philosophers. I now proceed to some observations of a more practical nature, which the consideration of justice suggests.

It would be endless to attempt to point out all the various forms in which the disposition formerly defined will display itself in life. I must content myself with mentioning one or two of its more remarkable effects, merely as examples of the influence it is likely to have on the conduct. One of the most important of these is that temper of mind we express by the word *candour*, which prevents our judgments, with respect to other men, from being improperly biassed by our passions and prejudices. This, although at bottom the disposition is the same, may be considered in three lights: *1st*, As it is displayed in appreciating the talents of others. *2d*, In judging of their intentions. *3d*, In controversy.

1st, There is no principle more deeply implanted in the mind than the love of fame and of distinction, and there is none which, when properly regulated, is subservient to more valuable purposes. It is, at the same time, a principle which it is perhaps as difficult to restrain within the bounds of

moderation as any other. In some ungoverned minds it seems to get the better of every other principle of action, and must be a source to the possessor of perpetual mortification and disgust, by leading him to aspire at eminence in every different line of ambition, and to repine if in any one of them he is surpassed by others. In the midst of the astonishing projects which employed the sublime genius of Richelieu, his peace of mind was completely ruined by the success of the *Cid* of Corneille. The first appearance of this tragedy (according to Fontenelle) alarmed the Cardinal as much as if he had seen the Spaniards at the gates of Paris; and the most acceptable flattery which his minions could offer, was to advise him to eclipse the fame of Corneille by a tragedy of his own. Nor did he aim merely at adding the fame of a poet to that of a statesman. Mortified to think that any one path of ambition was shut against him, he is said, when on his deathbed, to have held some conversations with his confessor about the possibility of his being canonized as a saint. In order to restrain this violent and insatiable desire within certain bounds there are many checks appointed in our constitution. In the first place, it can be *completely* gratified only by the actual possession of those qualities for which we wish to be esteemed, and of those advantages which are the proper grounds of distinction. A good man is never more mortified than when he is praised for qualities he does not possess, or for advantages in which he is

conscious he has no merit. Secondly, although the gratification of this principle consists in a certain superiority over other men, we feel that we are not entitled to take undue advantages of them. We may exert ourselves to the utmost in the race of glory, but we are not entitled to obstruct the progress of others, or to detract from their reputation in order to advance our own. All this will be readily granted in general ; and yet in practice there is surely nothing more difficult than to draw the line between emulation and envy ; or to check that self-partiality which, while it leads us to dwell on our own advantages, and to magnify them in our own estimation, prevents us either from attending sufficiently to the merits of others, or from viewing them in the most favourable light. Of this difficulty a wise and good man will soon be satisfied from his own experience, and he will endeavour to guard against it as far as he is able, by judging of the merits of a rival, or even of an enemy, as he would have done if there had been no interference between them. He will endeavour, in short, to do *justice* to their merits, not merely in words but in sincerity, and bring himself, if possible, to love and to honour that genius and ability which have eclipsed his own. Nor will he retire in disgust from the race because he has been outstripped by others, but will redouble all his exertions in the service of mankind ; recollecting, that, if nature has been more partial to others in her intellectual gifts than to him, she has left open to all the theatre of virtue, where the

merits of individuals are determined, not by their actual attainments, but by the use and improvement they make of those advantages which their situation has afforded them. In the meantime he will suffer no permanent mortification from the disappointment of his ambition ; but from his exertions to suppress every emotion of envy, and to conquer the mean partialities of vanity and self-love, he will derive a satisfaction with himself and a sense of his own elevation, of a still more flattering kind than all the splendour of ability can bestow. I must not omit to add, that the love of fame and of distinction, where it is strong, is commonly united with a certain degree of genius, and is seldom to be found in men wholly destitute of it. While those, therefore, that are under the influence of this passion see a few raised *above* them, let them recollect their own superiority to the multitude, and study to make the only return in their power for this partiality of nature, by devoting their talents, such as they are, to diffuse in the world *truth, virtue, and happiness*.

2d, Candour in judging of the intentions of others. I before mentioned several considerations which render it highly probable that there is much less vice or criminal intention in the world than is commonly imagined, and that the greater part of the disputes among mankind arise from mutual mistake and misapprehension. Every man must recollect many instances in which his motives have been grossly misapprehended by the world ; and it is but

reasonable for him to conclude that the case may have been the same with other men. It is but an instance, then, of that *justice* we owe to others to make the most candid allowances for their apparent deviations, and to give every action the most favourable construction it can possibly admit of. Such a temper, while it renders a man respectable and amiable in society, contributes perhaps more than any other circumstance to his private happiness. “When you would cheer your heart,” (says Marcus Antoninus,) “consider the excellencies and “abilities of your several acquaintance; the activity of one, the high sense of honour and modesty “of another, the liberality of a third, and in other “persons some other virtue. There is nothing so “delightful as Virtue appearing in the conduct “of your contemporaries as frequently as possible. Such thoughts we should still retain with “us.” *

3d, Candour in controversy implies a strong sense of justice united to a disinterested love of truth,—two qualities which are so nearly allied that they can scarcely be supposed to exist separately. The latter guards the mind against error in its solitary speculations, the former imposes an additional check when the irritation of dispute disturbs the cool exercise of the understanding. Where they are thus displayed in their joint effect, they evince the purity of that moral rectitude in which the essence of both consists; but so rarely is this combination ex-

* Book vi. c. 48.

hibited in human life, even in the character of those who maintain the fairest reputation for justice and for veracity, as to warrant the conclusion, that these virtues (so effectually secured to a certain extent by compulsory law or by public opinion,) are, in a moral point of view, of fully as difficult attainment as any of the others.

I formerly observed that the *love of truth* is natural to the mind independently of all views of utility, and that a strong curiosity properly directed is one of the chief constituents of genius. Without this stimulus and guide in our inquiries, ingenuity and industry only serve to lead us the farther astray from our object : And it is much to be regretted that there are so few cases in which these different qualities are all found united in the same person. Various circumstances indeed oppose themselves to this happy but rare combination ; in particular, the affectation of singularity ; an impatience in the study of particulars arising from an anxiety to grasp prematurely at general principles ; and that aversion which the timid and the indolent feel to abandon their habitual opinions.

But perhaps there is no temper which so completely disqualifies us for the search of truth as that which we experience when provoked by controversy or dispute. Some men undoubtedly are more misled by it than others ; but I apprehend there is no one, however modest and unassuming, who will not own that, upon such occasions, he has almost always felt his judgment warped, and a desire of

victory mingle itself, in spite of all his efforts, with his love of truth. Hence the aversion which all such men feel for controversy ; convinced from experience how likely it would be to betray themselves into error, and unwilling to afford an opportunity for displaying the envious and malignant passions of others. This amiable disposition has been often mentioned by the friends of Sir Isaac Newton as one of the most marked features in his character ; and we are even told that it led him to suppress, for a course of years, some of his most important discoveries, which he knew, from their nature, were likely to provoke opposition. “ He was indeed” (says one of his biographers) “ of so meek and gentle a disposition, and so great a lover of peace, that he would have rather chosen to remain in obscurity, than to have the calm of life ruffled by those storms and disputes which genius and learning always draw upon those who are most eminent for them.

“ From his love of peace arose, no doubt, that unusual kind of horror which he felt for all disputes. Steady unbroken attention, free from those frequent recoilings incident to others, was his peculiar felicity. He knew it, and he knew the value of it. When some objections, hastily made to his discoveries concerning light and colours, induced him to lay aside the design he had taken of publishing his Optical Lectures, we find him reflecting on that dispute into which he had unavoidably been drawn in these terms : ‘ I

“ blamed my own imprudence for parting with so
“ real a blessing as my quiet, to run after a sha-
“ dow.’ In the same temper, after he had sent
“ the manuscript to the Royal Society, with his
“ consent to the printing of it, upon Hook’s injuri-
“ ously insisting that he had himself solved Kep-
“ ler’s Problem before our author, he determined,
“ rather than be involved again in a controversy,
“ to suppress the third book ; and he was very
“ hardly prevailed on to alter that resolution.” *

I shall only add further on this head, that a love of controversy indicates not only an overweening vanity and a disregard for truth, but in general, perhaps always, it indicates a mediocrity of genius ; for it arises from those feelings of envy and jealousy which provoke little minds to depreciate the merit of useful discoveries. He who is conscious of his own inventive powers, and whose great object is to add to the stock of human knowledge, will reject unwillingly any plausible doctrine till after the most severe examination, and will separate, with patience and temper, the truths it contains from the errors that are blended with them. No opinion can be more groundless than that a captious and disputatious temper is a mark of acuteness. On the contrary, a sound and manly understanding is in no instance more strongly displayed than in a quick perception of important truth when imperfectly stated and blended with error ; a perception which may not be sufficient to satisfy the judgment completely

* Hutton’s Mathematical Dictionary.

at the time, or at least to obviate the difficulties of others, but which is sufficient to prevent it from a hasty rejection of the whole, from the obvious defects of some of the parts. Hence the important hints which an author of genius collects among the rubbish of his predecessors ; and which, so far from detracting from his own originality, place it in the strongest possible light, by showing that an idea which was already current in the world, and which had hitherto remained barren and useless, may, in the mind of a philosopher, become the germ of an extensive system.

I cannot help taking this opportunity of remarking, (although the observation is not much connected with the subject in which we are engaged,) that something similar to this may be applied to our critical judgments in the fine arts. It is easy to perceive blemishes, but it is the province of genius alone to have a quick perception of beauties, and to be eager to applaud them. And it is owing to this that of all critics a dunce is the severest, and a man of genuine taste the most indulgent.

Yes, they whom genius and true taste inspire,
Blame not with half the pleasure they admire ;
Each trifling fault unwillingly descry,
And view the beauties with a raptured eye. *

In the very elegant and interesting life of Mr Harris, published by his son, there is no circumstance more honourable at once to his head and

* William Melmoth.

heart than what is mentioned in the following passage.

“ It was with him a maxim, that the *most difficult*, and infinitely the preferable sort of criticism, both in literature and in the arts, was that which consists in finding out beauties, rather than defects. And, although he certainly wanted not judgment to distinguish and to prefer superior excellence of any kind, he was too reasonable to expect it should very often occur, and too wise to allow himself to be disgusted with common weakness and imperfection. He thought indeed that the very attempt to please, however it might fall short of its aim, deserved some return of thanks, some degree of approbation; and that to endeavour at being pleased by such efforts was due to justice, to good nature, and to good sense.”

The foregoing illustrations are stated at some length, in order to correct those partial definitions of justice which restrict its province to a rigorous observance of the rules of integrity or honesty in our dealings with our fellow-creatures. So far as this last disposition proceeds from a sense of duty, uninfluenced by human laws, it coincides exactly with that branch of virtue which has been now described under the title of Candour.

In the instances hitherto mentioned, the disposition of justice has been supposed to operate in restraining the partialities of the temper and passions. There are, however, no instances in which its influence is more necessary than where our *interest*

is concerned ; or, to express myself more explicitly, where there is an apparent interference between our *rights* and those of other men. In such cases a disposition to observe the rules of justice is called *integrity* or *honesty*,—which is so important a branch of justice that it has in a great measure appropriated the name to itself. The observations made by Mr Hume and Mr Smith on the differences between justice and the other virtues apply only to this last branch of it ; and it is this branch which properly forms the subject of that part of ethics which is called *Natural Jurisprudence*.* In what remains of this chapter, when the word justice occurs, it is to be understood in the limited sense now mentioned.

The circumstances which distinguish justice from the other virtues are chiefly two. In the first place, its rules may be laid down with a degree of accuracy of which moral precepts do not in any other instance admit. Secondly, its rules may be enforced, inasmuch as every breach of them violates the rights of some other person, and entitles him to employ force for his defence or security.

Another distinction between justice and the other virtues is much insisted on by Mr Hume. It is, according to him, an artificial and not a natural virtue, and derives all its obligations from the political union, and from considerations of utility. The principal argument alleged in support of this proposition is, that there is no implanted principle,

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. p. 365, *et seq.*

prompting us by a blind impulse to the exercise of justice, similar to those affections which conspire with and strengthen our benevolent dispositions. But, granting the fact upon which this argument proceeds, nothing can be inferred from it that makes an essential distinction between the obligations of justice and of beneficence ; for, so far as we act merely from the blind impulse of an affection, our conduct cannot be considered as virtuous. Our affections were given us to arrest our attention to particular objects, whose happiness is connected with our exertions ; and to excite and support the activity of the mind, when a sense of duty might be insufficient for the purpose : but the propriety or impropriety of our conduct depends in no instance on the strength or weakness of the affection, but on our obeying or disobeying the dictates of reason and of conscience. These inform us, in language which it is impossible to mistake, that it is sometimes a duty to check the most amiable and pleasing emotions of the heart ;—to withdraw, for example, from the sight of those distresses which stronger claims forbid us to relieve, and to deny ourselves that exquisite luxury which arises from the exercise of humanity. So far, therefore, as benevolence is a virtue, it is precisely on the same footing with justice ; that is, we approve of it, not because it is agreeable to us, but because we feel it to be a duty.

It may be farther remarked, that there are very strong implanted principles which serve as checks on *injustice* ; the principles, to wit, of resentment

and of indignation, which are surely as much a part of the human constitution as pity or parental affection. These principles imply a sense of injustice, and consequently of justice.

In one remarkable instance, too, nature has made an additional provision for keeping alive among men a sense of those obligations which justice imposes. That the good offices which we have received from others constitute a *debt* which it is morally incumbent on us to discharge by all lawful means in our power, is acknowledged in the common form of expression employed on such occasions, both by philosophers and the vulgar. As the obligations of gratitude, however, do not admit (like the rules of honesty, strictly so called) of support from the magistrate, nature has judged it proper to enforce their observance by one of the most irresistible and delightful impulses of the human frame. According to this view of the subject, gratitude, considered as a moral duty, is a branch of justice recommended to us in a peculiar manner by those pleasing emotions which accompany all the modes of benevolent affection. It is at the same time a branch of what was formerly called rational benevolence, not interfering with the duty we owe to mankind in general, but tending, in a variety of respects, to augment the sum of social happiness. The casuistical questions to which this part of ethics has given rise, however perplexing some of them may appear in theory, seldom, if ever, occasion any hesitation in the conduct of those to whom a sense

of duty is the acknowledged rule of action :—Such is the harmony among all the various parts of our constitution, when subjected to the control of reason and conscience ; and so nearly allied are the dispositions which prompt to the different offices of a virtuous life.

As the rules of justice, when applied to questions involving the rights of other men, admit in their statement of a degree of accuracy peculiar to themselves, that part of ethics which relates to them has been formed in modern times into a separate branch of the science, under the title of Natural Jurisprudence. The manner in which this subject has been hitherto treated has been much influenced by the professional habits of those who first turned their attention to it. Not only have its principles been delivered in the form of a system of law, but the technical arrangements of the Roman code have been servilely copied.

What I mean by *stating the principles of Jurisprudence in the form of a system of law* will appear from the following observations.

In the case of justice there is always a *right* on one hand corresponding to an *obligation* on the other. If I am under an obligation, for example, to abstain from violating the property of my neighbour, he has a right to defend by force his property when invaded. It therefore appears that the rules of justice may be laid down in two different forms, either as a system of duties, or as a system of rights.

The former view of the subject belongs properly to the moralist, the latter to the lawyer. It is in this last form accordingly that the principles of justice have been stated by the writers on natural jurisprudence.

So far there is nothing to be reprehended in the plan they have followed. On the contrary, a considerable advantage was gained in point of method by adopting that very comprehensive and accurate division of our rights which the civilians had introduced. As the whole object of law is to protect men in all that they may lawfully *do*, or *possess*, or *demand*, civilians have defined the word *jus*, or *right*, to be *facultas aliquid agendi, vel possidendi, vel ab alio consequendi*,—a lawful claim to do anything, to possess anything, or to demand something from some other person. The first of these may be called the right of liberty, or the right of employing the powers we have received from nature in every case in which we do not injure the rights of others ; the second, the right of property ; the third, the rights arising from contract. The two last were farther distinguished from each other by calling the former (to wit, the right of property) a *real* right, and the latter (to wit, the rights arising from contract) *personal* rights, because they respect some particular person or persons from whom the fulfilment of the contract may be required.

This division of our rights appears to be comprehensive and philosophical, and it affords a convenient arrangement for exhibiting an indirect view of

the different duties which justice prescribes. "What
" I have a right to do, it is the duty of my fellow-
" creatures to allow me to do without molestation.
" What is my property, no man ought to take from
" me, or to disturb me in the enjoyment of it. And
" what I have a right to demand of any man it is
" his duty to perform." * Such a system, therefore,
with respect to our rights, exhibits (though in a
manner somewhat indirect and artificial) a system
of the rules of justice.

But the writers on natural jurisprudence have
not been contented with copying from the Roman
law the great divisions of their subject. In conse-
quence of that influence of professional habits which
we may remark daily on the most vigorous, and in
other respects the most enlightened understandings,
they have been led to follow the Roman code in
many unnatural and capricious arrangements; and
what is worse, they have substituted some of its
most absurd principles as maxims of natural jus-
tice. To the same cause may be ascribed the frivo-
lous discussions with respect to minute and ima-
ginary questions, which so often occupy the place
of those general and fundamental disquisitions
that are suggested by the common nature and the
common circumstances of the human race. It is
sufficient to mention the space which is occupied in
most systems of jurisprudence, with an explanation
of the different methods of acquiring property by
accession, and with a discussion of the various ima-

* Reid on the Active Powers, p. 388. Quarto Edition.

ginary cases that may be supposed when the properties of different individuals may happen to be thus confounded.

A still more material inconvenience has resulted from the professional habits of the early writers on jurisprudence. Not contented with stating the rules of justice in that form and language which was most familiar to their own minds, they have attempted to extend the same plan to all the other branches of moral philosophy ; and, by the help of arbitrary definitions, to supersede the necessity of accommodating their modes of inquiry to the various nature of their subject. Although justice is the only branch of virtue in which there is always a right on the one hand, corresponding to an obligation on the other, they have contrived, by fictions of *imperfect* and of *external* rights, to treat indirectly of all our different duties, by pointing out the rights which are supposed to be their correlates. It is chiefly owing to this that a study which, in the writings of the ancients, is the most engaging and the most useful of any, has become in so great a proportion of modern systems as uninviting and almost as useless as the logic of the schoolmen.

Besides these defects in the modern systems of jurisprudence, (defects produced by the accidental habits of those who first cultivated the study,) there is another essential one arising from the object of the science. Although the obligations of justice are by no means resolvable into considerations of utility, yet in every political association they are

so blended together in the institutions of men, that it is impossible for us to separate them completely in our reasonings. And accordingly (as Mr Hume has remarked) the writers on jurisprudence, while they profess to confine themselves entirely to the former, are continually taking principles for granted which have a reference to the latter. It seems, therefore, to be proper, instead of treating of jurisprudence merely as a system of natural justice, to unite it with politics, and to illustrate the general principles of justice and of expediency, as they are actually combined in the constitution of society. This view of the subject (which properly belongs to the consideration of man as the member of a political body) will show, at the same time, how happily these principles coincide in their application; and how partial those conceptions of utility are which have so often led politicians to depart from what they felt to be just, in quest of what their limited judgment apprehended to be expedient.

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER SECOND.

The following observations on the *Right of Property* are introduced here chiefly with a view of illustrating a remark in the foregoing chapter, that we possess rights antecedent to the establishment of the political union. The greater part of them

have a reference to the Essay on Property in Lord Kames's Historical Law Tracts. *

It cannot, I apprehend, be doubted, that, according to the notions to which we in the present state of society are habituated from our infancy, the three following things are included in the idea of property.

1. A right of exclusive enjoyment.

2. A right of inquiry after our property when taken away without our consent, and of reclaiming it wherever found.

3. A right of transference.

We do not consider our property in any object to be complete, unless we can exercise all these three rights with respect to it.

Lord Kames endeavours to show that these ideas are not agreeable to the apprehensions of the human mind in the ruder periods of society, but imply a refinement and abstraction of thought which are the result of improvement in law and government. The relation (in particular) of property, independent of possession, he thinks of too metaphysical a nature for the mind of a savage. "It appears to me" (says he) "to be highly probable, that among savages involved in objects of sense, and strangers to abstract speculation, property, and the rights or moral powers arising from it, never are with accuracy distinguished from the natural powers that must be exerted upon the subject to make it profitable to the possessor. The man who kills

* Tract iii. Third Edition.

“ and eats, who sows and reaps, at his own pleasure,
“ independent of another’s will, is naturally deemed
“ proprietor. The grossest savages understand
“ power without right, of which they are made
“ sensible by daily acts of violence ; but property
“ without possession is a conception too abstract for
“ a savage, or for any person who has not studied
“ the principles of law.”*

With this remark I cannot agree; because I think the right of property is founded on a natural sentiment, which must be felt in full force in the lowest state of society. The sentiment I allude to is that of a moral connection between labour and a right of exclusive enjoyment to the fruits of it. This connection it will be proper to illustrate more particularly.

Let us suppose, then, a country so fertile as to produce all the necessaries and accommodations of life without any exertions of human industry ; it is manifest, that in such a state of things no man would think of appropriating to himself any of these necessaries or accommodations any more than we in this part of the globe think of appropriating air or water. As this, however, is not in any part of the earth, the condition of man, doomed as he is, by the circumstances of his birth, to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, it would be reasonable to expect, *a priori*, that nature would make some provision for securing to individuals the fruits of their industry. In fact, she *has* made such a

* Ibid. p. 90.

provision in the natural sentiments of mankind, which lead them to consider industry as entitled to reward, and in particular, the labourer as entitled to the fruit of his own labour. These, I think, may be fairly stated as *moral axioms*, to which the mind yields its assent, as immediately and necessarily as it does to any axiom in mathematics or metaphysics.

How cruel is the mortification we feel when we see an industrious man reduced by some unforeseen misfortune to beggary in old age ! We can scarcely help complaining of the precarious condition of humanity, and that man should be thus doomed to be the sport of accident : And we feel ourselves called on, as far as we are able, to repair, by our own liberality, this unjust distribution of the goods of fortune. On the other hand, it is difficult to avoid some degree of dissatisfaction when we see the natural and deserved reward of industry acquired all at once by a prize in the lottery or by gaming, although in this instance the uneasiness (as might be expected from the natural benevolence of the human mind) is trifling in comparison of what it is in the other case. Our dissatisfaction in particular instances is much greater when we see the labourer deprived by accident of the *immediate* fruit of his own labour ;—when, for example, he has nearly completed a complicated machine, and some delicate part of it gives way and renders all his toil useless.

If another person interferes with the fruit of his industry, our dissatisfaction and indignation are still

more increased. We feel here a variety of sentiments. 1. A dissatisfaction that the labourer does not enjoy that reward to which his industry entitled him. 2. A dissatisfaction that another person, who did not labour, should acquire the possession of an object of value. And 3. An indignation against the man who deprived the labourer of his just reward.

This sentiment, “ that the labourer deserves the “ fruit of his own labour,” is the *chief*, (or rather abstracting from positive institution) the *only* foundation of the sense of property. An attempt to deprive him of it is a species of *injustice* which rouses the indignation of every impartial spectator ; and so deeply are these principles implanted in our nature, that we cannot help feeling some degree of remorse when we deprive even a hive of bees of that provision which they had industriously collected for their own use.

The writers, indeed, on natural law ascribe in general the origin of property to priority of occupancy, and have puzzled themselves in attempting to explain how this act should appropriate to an individual what was formerly in common. Grotius and Puffendorff insist that this right of occupancy is founded upon a tacit but understood assent of all mankind, that the first occupant should become the owner. And Barbeyrac, Locke, and others, that the very act of occupancy alone, being a degree of bodily labour, is, from a principle of natural justice, without any compact, a sufficient foundation of pro-

perty. Blackstone, although he thinks that the dispute about the manner in which occupancy conveys a right of property, savours too much of scholastic refinement, expresses no doubt about its having this effect independent of positive institutions. *

Some later philosophers have founded the right of property on the general sympathy of mankind with the *reasonable* expectation which the occupant has formed of enjoying unmolested the object he has got possession of, or of which he was the first discoverer ; and on the indignation felt by the impartial spectator when he sees this reasonable expectation disappointed. This theory (which I have been assured from the best authority was adopted by Mr Smith in his lectures on Jurisprudence,) seems to have been suggested by a passage in Dr Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy, in which he says, that "it is
" immoral, when we can support ourselves other-
" wise, to defeat any innocent design of another; and
" that on this immorality is founded the regard we
" owe to the claims of the first occupant." In this theory, too, it is taken for granted that priority of occupancy founds a right of property, and that such a right may even be acquired by having accidentally *seen* a valuable object before it was observed by any other person.

In order to think with accuracy on this subject, it is necessary to distinguish carefully the complete right of property which is founded on labour, from the transient right of possession which is acquired by mere priority of occupancy. Thus, before the

* See his Comm. Book ii. Chap. 1.

appropriation of land, if any individual had occupied a particular spot for repose or shade, it would have been *unjust* to deprive him of the possession of it. This, however, was only a transient right. The spot of ground would again become *common* the moment the occupier had left it; that is, the *right* of possession would remain no longer than the *act* of possession. Cicero illustrates this happily by the similitude of a theatre. “*Quemadmodum theatrum, cum commune sit, recte tamen dici potest ejus esse eum locum quem quisque occupavit.*” *

The general conclusions which I deduce from the foregoing observations are these :—

1. That in every state of society labour, wherever it is exerted, is understood to found a right of property.

2. That, according to natural law, (in the sense at least in which that phrase is commonly employed by writers on jurisprudence) labour is the *only* original way of acquiring property.

3. That, according to natural law, mere occupancy founds only a right of possession; and that, wherever it founds a complete right of property, it owes its force to positive institutions.

An attention to these conclusions, in particular to the distinction between the transient right of possession founded on occupancy, and the permanent right of property founded on labour, will, if I am not mistaken, clear up some of the difficulties which involve the first steps in the history of pro-

* De Finibus, L. iii. c. 20.

perty, according to the view of the subject given by Lord Kames ; and it was with this view I was led to premise these general principles to the slight historical sketch I am now to offer.

With respect to that system which refers the origin of property to the political union and to considerations of utility, it seems sufficient to observe, that so far is government from *creating* this *right*, that its necessary effect is to subject it to certain limitations. Abstracting from the political confederation, every man's property is solely at his own disposal. He is supreme judge in his own cause, and may defend what he conceives to be his right as far as his power reaches. In the state of civil society his property is regulated by positive laws, and he must acquiesce in the judgment of his superiors with respect to his rights, even in those cases where he feels it to be unjust.

From the passage already quoted from Kames, it appears that he conceived the idea of property without possession to be of too abstract and metaphysical a nature to be apprehended by a savage ; and he has collected a variety of facts to prove, that, according to the common notions of mankind, in the infancy of jurisprudence, the right of property is understood to cease the moment that possession is at an end. But on a more attentive examination of the subject, I apprehend it will be found that the ideas of savages, with respect to property, are the same with ours ; that mere occupancy without labour founds only a right of possession ;

and that labour, wherever it is employed, founds an exclusive and permanent right to the fruits of it. Lord Kames's theory has obviously been suggested, by the common doctrine with respect to the right of property being founded in priority of occupancy, compared with the acknowledged fact, that among rude nations occupancy does not establish a permanent right. The other arguments which he has alleged in support of his opinion will be found to be equally inconclusive.

Before I proceed to the consideration of these it may be proper to observe, that we must not always form an idea of the sentiments of men from the *defects* of their laws. The existence indeed of a law is a proof of the sentiments which men felt when the law was made ; but the defects of a law are not always proofs that men did not feel that there *were* disorders in the state of society which required correction. The laws of a country may not make provision for reparation to the original proprietor in the case of theft ; but it will not follow from this that men do not apprehend the original proprietor to have any *right* when his property has been stolen from him. The application of this general remark to some of the arguments I am now to consider will, I hope, be so obvious, as to render it unnecessary for me to point it out particularly.

Among these arguments, one of the most plausible is founded on a general principle, which appears, from a variety of facts quoted by Kames, to run through most rude systems of jurispru-

dence, that, in the case of stolen goods, the claim of the *bona fide* purchaser is preferable to that of the original proprietor. This he accounts for from the imperfect notions they have of the metaphysical nature of property when separated from possession. But if this were the case, the same laws should support the claim of the *thief* against the original proprietor: or rather, indeed, neither the original proprietor, nor any one else, could conceive that he had any connection with the object stolen the moment after it was out of his possession. The fact is, that this respect paid to the *bona fide* purchaser is a proof not of any misapprehension with respect to the idea of property, but of a weak government and an imperfect police. Where thefts are easily committed, and where no public fairs or markets are established, it would put a complete end to all transferences of property, if the *bona fide* purchaser were left exposed to the claims of former proprietors. Such a practice would be attended with still greater inconveniences than arise from the casual violations of property by theft; not to mention that the regard shown to the *bona fide* purchaser must have a tendency to repress theft, by redoubling the attention of individuals to preserve the actual possession of their property. That these or some other views of utility were the real foundation of the laws quoted by Kames, is confirmed by an old regulation in our own country, prohibiting buying and selling, except in open market,—a regulation which had obviously been suggested by

the experience of the inconveniences arising from the latent claims of former proprietors against *bona fide* purchasers.

Another argument mentioned by Kames in support of his theory is founded on the shortness of the term which completes prescription among rude nations ; a single year, for example, in the case of moveables, by the oldest law of the Romans. This law, he says, testifies that property, independent of possession, was considered to be a *right of the slenderest kind*. It is evident, that, upon his own principles, it should not in that state of society have been considered as a right at all. If it was conceived to subsist a single day after the possession was at an end, the metaphysical difficulty which he magnifies so much was obviously surmounted. In every society it will be found expedient to fix some term for prescription, and the particular length of it must be determined by the circumstances of the society at the time. In general, as law improves, and government becomes more effectual, a greater attention to the stability of property, and consequently a longer term for prescription, may be expected.

The community of goods which is said to take place among some rude nations will be found, on examination, to be perfectly consistent with the account I have given of their ideas on the subject of property. Where the game is taken by a common effort, the natural sense of justice dictates that it should be enjoyed in common. And indeed, ab-

stracting from all considerations of justice, the experience of the precarious fortune of the chase would soon suggest to the common sense of mankind the expediency of such an arrangement. This, however, does not indicate any imperfection in their idea of property ; for even in this state of society there are always some articles which are understood to be the exclusive property of the individual, such as his bow and arrows, and the instruments he employs in fishing.

I am confirmed in these conclusions by the account given by Dr Robertson of the American Indians ; and the more so, as the facts he mentions, and even his reasonings, stand in opposition to his own preconceived opinion. “ *Nations*” (he says expressly) “ *which depend upon hunting are strangers to the idea of property ;*” and yet, when he comes to explain himself, it appears that even in the present age of metaphysical refinement, if our physical circumstances were the same, we should feel and judge exactly as they do. “ As the animals” (he continues in the passage immediately following the last sentence I quoted) “ on which the hunter feeds are not bred under his inspection, nor nourished by his care, he can claim no right to them while they run wild in the forest. Where game is so plentiful that it can be caught with little trouble, men never dream of appropriating what is of small value, or of easy acquisition. Where it is so rare that the labour or danger of the chase requires the united efforts

“ of a tribe or village, what is killed is a common
“ stock belonging equally to all, who, by their skill
“ or their courage, have contributed to the success
“ of the excursion. The forest or hunting grounds
“ are deemed the property of the tribe, from which
“ it has a title to exclude every rival nation. But
“ no individual arrogates a right to any district of
“ these in preference to his fellow-citizens. They
“ belong equally to all, and thither, as to a general
“ and undivided store, all repair in quest of suste-
“ nance. The same principles by which they re-
“ gulate their chief occupation extend to that which
“ is subordinate. Even agriculture has not intro-
“ duced among them a complete idea of property.
“ As the men hunt, the women labour together, and
“ after they have shared the toils of the seed-time,
“ they enjoy the harvest in common.” *

In the notes and illustrations at the end of the history, Dr Robertson seems to have been aware that he had expressed himself somewhat too strongly on this subject, and he has even gone so far as to intimate his suspicions that the common facts are not very accurately stated. “ I strongly sus-
“ pect that a community of goods, and an undivid-
“ ed store are known only among the rudest tribes
“ of hunters, and that, as soon as any species of
“ agriculture or regular industry is known, the
“ idea of an exclusive right of property to the fruits
“ of them is introduced.”

In support of this opinion, Dr Robertson refers

* History of America, Book iv.

to accounts which he had received concerning the state of property among the Indians in very different regions of America. “The idea of the natives “of Brazil” (says the Chevalier de Pinto, who writes on this subject from personal observation,) “concerning property is, that, if any person cultivate a field, he alone ought to enjoy the produce “of it, and no other has a title to pretend to it. If “an individual or a family go a hunting or fishing, “what is caught belongs to the individual or family, and they communicate no part of it but to their “Cazique, and such of their kindred as happen to “be indisposed.

“If any person in the village come to their hut “he may sit down freely and eat without asking “liberty. But this is the consequence of their general principle of hospitality, for I never observed any partition of the increase of their fields, “or the produce of the chase, which I could consider as the result of any idea concerning the community of goods. On the contrary, they are so “much attached to what they deem to be their property, that it would be extremely dangerous to “encroach on it. As far as I have seen or can “learn, there is not one tribe of Indians in South “America among whom that community of goods, “which has been so highly extolled, is known. The “circumstance in the government of the jesuits “most irksome to the Indians of Paraguay was the “community of goods which those fathers introduced. This was repugnant to the original ideas

“ of the Indians. They were acquainted with the
 “ rights of private exclusive property, and they
 “ submitted with impatience to the regulations
 “ which destroyed them. *

“ Actual possession” (says a missionary who resided several years among the Indians of the Five Nations,) “ gives a right to the soil, but, whenever
 “ a possessor sees fit to quit it, another has as good
 “ a right to take it as he who left it. This law or
 “ custom respects not only the particular spot on
 “ which he erects his house, but also his planting-ground. If a man has prepared a particular spot
 “ of ground, on which he proposes in future to
 “ build or plant, no man has a right to incommode
 “ him, much less to the fruit of his labours, until it
 “ appears that he voluntarily gives up his views.
 “ But I never heard of any formal conveyance from
 “ one Indian to another in their natural state. The
 “ limits of every canton is circumscribed, that is,
 “ they are allowed to hunt as far as such a river on
 “ this hand, and such a mountain on the other.
 “ This area is occupied and improved by individuals and their families. Individuals, not the
 “ community, have the use and profit of their own
 “ labours, or success in hunting.” †

In a passage quoted on a former occasion from Crantz, a remarkable instance is given of a sacred and even superstitious regard to property among the Greenlanders. “ Not one of these people” (says he)

* M. le Chev. de Pinto, MS., *penes* Dr Robertson.

† MS. of Mr Gideon Kawley, *penes* Dr Robertson.

“ will appropriate to himself a sea-dog in which he
“ finds one or more harpoons with untorn thongs, nor
“ even carry away drift-wood, or other things thrown
“ up by the sea, if they are covered with a stone, be-
“ cause they consider this as an indication that they
“ have been already appropriated by some other per-
“ son.” This is the more singular, as they are described
by the same very authentic writer, as carrying their
pacific and unresisting disposition to an extraordinary
length, when their own rights are invaded by
strangers. “ They will rather” (he tells us) “ quit
“ a territory than expel those who come and fish
“ within the dams which they have raised with
“ great labour.” He justly, however, ascribes this
to the passiveness and cowardice of their tempers,
and not to a defect in their idea of property, or to
an unconsciousness of the injury they have received.
The contrary, indeed, may be safely inferred from
the singular integrity by which they are distinguished
in their own transactions.

I formerly said, that, according to the *Law of Nature*, labour not only founds an exclusive right of property in those objects to which it has communicated their utility, but that it is the *sole* method by which an object *can* be appropriated by an individual, independently of conventional ideas and institutions ; and that, wherever a priority of occupancy is understood to establish a right beyond the period of actual possession, it derives this effect entirely from regulations (either tacitly or formally recognized among the parties concerned) which

have been gradually suggested, in the progress of human reason, by considerations of convenience or of expediency. It must not, however, be inferred from this, that in a civilized society there is anything in that species of property which is acquired by labour to which individuals owe a more sacred regard, than they do to every other species of property created or recognized by positive laws. Among these last there are *many* which have derived their origin from a principle no less obligatory than our natural sense of *justice* ; a clear perception in the mind of the legislator (sanctioned perhaps by the concurrent experience of different ages and nations) of *general utility* ; and to *all* of them, while they exist, the reverence of the subject is due on the same principle which binds him to respect and to maintain the social order. Nature has provided for human happiness, in this instance, in a manner precisely analogous to her general economy. Those simple and indispensable rules of *right* and *wrong*, of *just* and *unjust*, without which the fruits of the earth could not be converted to the use of man, nor his existence maintained even in the rudest form of the social union, she has engraved on the heart as an essential part of the human constitution,—leaving men, as society advances, to employ their gradually improving *reason* in fixing, according to their own ideas of expediency, the various regulations concerning the acquisition, the alienation, and transmission of property, which the more complicated interests of the community may require.

It is also beautifully ordered, that, while a regard for legal property is thus secured, among men capable of reflection, by a sense of general utility, the same effect is accomplished, in the minds of the multitude, *by habit and the association of ideas* ; in consequence of which all the inequalities of fortune are sanctioned by mere prescription ; and long possession is conceived to found a *right of property* as complete as what, by the law of nature, an individual has in the fruits of his own industry.

In such a state of things, therefore, as that with which we are connected, the right of property must be understood to derive its origin from *two* distinct sources ; the one is, that natural sentiment of the mind which establishes a moral connection between labour and an exclusive enjoyment of the fruits of it ; the other is the municipal institutions of the country where we live. These institutions every where take rise partly from ideas of natural justice, and partly (perhaps chiefly) from ideas of supposed utility,—two principles which, when properly understood, are I believe always in harmony with each other, and which it ought to be the great aim of every legislator to reconcile to the utmost of his power. Among those questions, however, which fall under the cognizance of positive laws, there are many on which natural justice is entirely silent, and which, of consequence, may be discussed on principles of *utility* solely. Such are most of the questions concerning the regulation of the succession to a man's property after his death ; of some

of which it may perhaps be found that the determination ought to vary with the circumstances of the society, and which have certainly, *in fact*, been frequently determined by the caprice of the legislator, or by some principle ultimately resolvable into an accidental association of ideas. Indeed, various cases may be supposed in which it is not only useful but necessary that a rule should be fixed ; while, at the same time, *neither* justice nor utility seem to be much interested in the particular decision.

In examining the questions which turn on considerations of *utility*, some will immediately occur of which the determination is so obvious, and at the same time so universal in their application, that the laws of all enlightened nations on the subject may be expected to be the same. Of this description are many of the questions which may be stated with respect to the effects of *priority of occupancy* in establishing *permanent* rights. These questions are of course frequently confounded with questions of *natural law* ; and in *one* sense of that phrase they may not improperly be comprehended under the title, but the distinction between them and the other class of questions is essential ; for wherever considerations of utility are involved the political union is supposed ; whereas the principles of *justice*, properly so called, (of that justice, for example, which respects the right of the labourer to enjoy the fruit of his own industry) is inseparable from the human frame. It is necessary (as I already said) to maintain the social union even in its

simplest form ; and in its most improved state it operates as a principle of morality to guard the rights of individuals, and to maintain the order of society, in numberless instances to which the laws of the magistrate cannot extend.

I have insisted the longer on this distinction, because, obvious as it may appear, it has been seldom attended to by writers on jurisprudence. Confining their views to the state of their *own* ideas and feelings, as modified by artificial habits, they have neglected to draw the line between the *right of property as recognized by the law of nature*, and the *right of property as created by municipal institutions*. In their speculations, accordingly, on this subject, they have searched for *one general principle* into which all the different phenomena might be resolved ; and in this manner, while they have perverted the history of mankind in the early stages of society, they have weakened the foundations on which property rests when considered as a part of the political system.

CHAPTER THIRD.

OF VERACITY.

THE important rank which Veracity holds among our social duties appears from the obvious consequences that would result if no foundation were laid for it in the constitution of our nature. The purposes of speech would be frustrated, and every man's opportunities of knowledge would be limited to his own personal experience.

Considerations of utility, however, do not seem to be the only ground of the approbation we bestow on this disposition. Abstracting from all regard to consequences, there is something pleasing and amiable in sincerity, openness, and truth ; something disagreeable and disgusting in duplicity, equivocation, and falsehood. Dr Hutcheson himself, the great patron of that theory which resolves all moral qualities into benevolence, confesses this ; for he speaks of a *sense* which leads us to approve of veracity, distinct from the *sense* which approves of qualities useful to mankind. “ *Facultatis hujus, sive orationis, comes est et moderator sensus quidam subtilior, ex veri etiam cognoscendi appeti-*

“ tione naturali non parum confirmatus, quo vera
 “ omnia, simplicia, fidelia comprobamus ; falsa fic-
 “ ta, fallacia odimus.” *—“ *Sensu* enim cujusque
 “ *proxime* commendatur is sermonis usus, quem
 “ communis exigit utilitas. Hoc vero stabile con-
 “ silium eo tantum utendi sermone, qui cum animi
 “ sententia congruit, quique alios non decipit, com-
 “ probant et animi sensus *per se*, et utilitatis com-
 “ munis ratio.” † As this, however, is at best but
 a vague way of speaking, it may be proper to ana-
 lyze more particularly that part of our constitution
 from which our approbation of veracity arises.

That there is in the human mind a natural or in-
 stinctive principle of veracity, has been remarked
 by many authors ; the same part of our constitution
 which prompts to social intercourse, prompting also
 to sincerity in our mutual communications. Truth
 is always the spontaneous and native expression of
 our sentiments ; whereas falsehood implies a cer-
 tain violence done to our nature, in consequence of
 the influence of some motive which we are anxious
 to conceal.

With respect to the nature of TRUTH various meta-
 physical speculations have been offered to the world,
 and various definitions have been attempted, both by

* *Philosophiæ Moralis Institutio compendiaria*, Lib. ii. cap. 9.

† *Ibid.* Lib. ii. cap. 10.

Aristotle expresses himself nearly to the same purpose.
 Καθ' αὐτο μὲν ψευδὸς φαῦλον καὶ ψεκτον, το δὲ ἀληθὲς καλὸν καὶ
 ἐπαινετόν.—Aristot. *Ethic. Nicomach.* Lib. iv. cap. 7. Various
 passages of a similar import occur in Cicero.

the ancients and moderns. These, however, have thrown but little light on the subject, which is not surprising, when we consider that the word truth expresses a simple idea or notion, of which no analysis or explication is possible. The same observation may be made with respect to the words *knowledge* and *belief*. All of them express notions which are implied in every judgment of the understanding, and which no being can form who is not possessed of a rational nature. And, by the way, these notions deserve to be added to the list formerly mentioned, as exemplifications of the imperfection of the account commonly given of the origin of our ideas. They are obviously not derived from any particular sense; and they do not seem to be referable to any part of our constitution, but to the *understanding*; or, in other words, to those rational powers which distinguish man from the brutes. This language, I know, will appear to be very loose and inaccurate to those who have familiarized their minds to the common doctrine; but it is a plain and indisputable statement of the fact.

To acquire knowledge or to discover truth, is the proper object of *curiosity*; a principle of action which is coeval with the first operations of the intellect, and which in most minds continues through life to have a powerful influence in one way or another on the character and the conduct. It is this principle which puts the intellectual faculties in motion, and gives them that exercise which is necessary for their developement and improvement; and

which, according to the direction it takes, and the particular set of faculties it exercises, is the principal foundation of the *diversities* of genius among men. And as the *diversities* of genius proceed from the different directions in which curiosity engages the attention, so the *inequalities* of genius among individuals may be traced in a great measure to the different degrees of ardour and of perseverance with which the curiosity operates. When I say this, I would not be understood to insinuate, that the different capacities of individuals are the same ; a supposition contradicted by obvious facts, and contrary to what we should be led to conclude from the analogy of the body. I only wish to impress on all those who have any connection with the education of youth, the great importance of stimulating the curiosity, and of directing it to proper objects, as the most effectual of all means for securing the improvement of the mind : I may add, as one of the most effectual provisions that can be made for the happiness of the individual, in consequence of the resources it furnishes when we are left to depend on ourselves for enjoyment ; and in consequence also of the progressive vigour with which it operates to the very close of life, in proportion to the enlargement of our experience and the extent of our information.

In order, however, to prevent misapprehensions of my meaning, it is necessary for me again to remark, that the curiosity on which I lay so great a stress is that curiosity alone which has *truth* for its

object. "There are many men" (says Butler,) "who have a strong curiosity to know what is *said*," "who have no curiosity to know what is *true*;"—men who value knowledge only as furnishing an employment to their memory, or as supplying a gratification to their vanity in their intercourse with others. It is a weakness which we may presume has prevailed more or less in all ages; but which has been much encouraged in modern Europe, by that superstitious admiration of antiquity which has withdrawn so much genius and industry from the pursuits of science to those of erudition. No prejudice can be conceived more adverse to the progress of useful knowledge, not only as it occasions an idle waste of time and labour which might have been more profitably employed, but as it contributes powerfully to destroy that simplicity and modesty of temper which are the genuine characteristics of the true philosopher.

I think it of importance to add, that the love of truth, where it is the great motive of our intellectual pursuits, gains daily an accession of strength as our knowledge advances. I already said that it is an ultimate fact in our nature, and is not resolvable into views of utility. Its extensive effects on human happiness are discovered only in the progress of our experience; but when this discovery is once made, it superadds to our instinctive curiosity every stimulus which self-love and benevolence can furnish. The connection between error and misery, between truth and happiness, becomes gradually

more apparent as our inquiries proceed, and produces at last a complete conviction that, even in those cases where we are unable to trace it, the connection subsists. He who feels this as he ought, will consider a steadfast adherence to the truth as an expression of benevolence to man, and of confidence in the righteous administration of the universe, and will suspect the purity of those motives, which would lead him to advance the good of his species or the glory of his Maker, by deceit and hypocrisy.

In offering these remarks I shall no doubt be thought to have taken a very wide circuit in order to illustrate the nature of that veracity which is incumbent on us in our intercourse with our fellow-creatures. But it appears to me that the most solid of all foundations for the uniform and the scrupulous exercise of this virtue, is to cherish the love of truth in general, and to impress the mind with a conviction of its important effects on our own happiness and on that of society. There is indeed a sort of gross and ostensible practice of this duty, which is secured by what we call the *point of honour* in modern Europe, which brands with infamy every palpable deviation from the truth in matters of *fact*. The law of honour here operates in the case of veracity, in some measure as the law of the magistrate operates in the case of justice. But, as in the latter case, a man may be unjust in the sight of God and of his own conscience without transgressing the letter of any statute, so in the former, without forfeiting his character as a gentleman,

he may often incur all the guilt of a liar and an impostor. Is it, in a moral view, more criminal to misrepresent a fact, than to impose on the world by what we know to be an unsound or a fallacious argument? Is it, in a moral view, more criminal to mislead another by a *verbal* lie, than by actions which convey a false idea of our intentions? Is it, in a moral view, more criminal, or is it more inconsistent with the dignity of a man of true honour, to defraud men in a private transaction by an incorrect or erroneous statement of circumstances, than to mislead the public to their own ruin by those wilful deviations from truth into which we see men daily led by views of interest or ambition, or by the spirit of political faction? Numberless cases, in short, may be fancied, in which our only security for truth is the virtuous disposition of the individual, and where the restraint of public opinion has little or no influence. Perhaps I should not go too far were I to affirm, that, as there is no duty of which the gross and ostensible practice is so effectually secured by the manners of modern times, so there is none of the obligation of which mankind seem in general to be so insensible, considered as moral agents, and accountable to God for their thoughts and intentions.

Among the various causes which have conspired to relax our moral principles on this important article, the facility which the press affords us in modern times of addressing the world by means of anonymous publications, is probably one of the

most powerful. The salutary restraint which a regard to character imposes, in most cases, on our moral deviations, is here withdrawn ; and we have no security for the fidelity of the writer, but his disinterested love of truth and of mankind. The palpable and ludicrous misrepresentations of facts, to which we are accustomed from our infancy in the periodical prints of the day, gradually unhinge our faith in all such communications ; and what we are every day accustomed to see, we cease in time to regard with due abhorrence. Nor is this the only moral evil resulting from the licentiousness of the press. The intentions of nature in appointing public esteem as the reward of virtue, and infamy as the punishment of vice, are in a great measure thwarted ; and while the fairest characters are left open to the assaults of a calumny which it is impossible to trace to its author, the opinions of the public may be so divided by the artifices of hireling flatterers, with respect to men of the most profligate and abandoned lives, as to enable them not only to brave the censures of the world, but to retaliate with more than an equal advantage on the good name of those who have the rashness to accuse them.

In a free government like ours the liberty of the press has been often and justly called the Palladium of the Constitution ; but it may reasonably be doubted whether this liberty would be at all impaired by a regulation, which, while it left the press perfectly open to every man who was willing open-

ly to avow his opinions, rendered it impossible for any individual to publish a sentence without the sanction of his name. Upon this question, however, considered in a *political* point of view, I shall not presume to decide. Considered in a *moral* light, the advantages of such a regulation appear to be obvious and indisputable, and the *effect* could scarcely fail to have a most extensive influence on national manners.

Under this article of veracity in testimony might be considered a great variety of those abuses of speech which occur daily in ordinary conversation. But the consideration of these would lead me into details too minute for my general plan. And I quit the subject with the less reluctance, as it has been so ably discussed by Dr Butler in his excellent *Discourse on the Government of the Tongue*.

Beside that love of truth which seems evidently to be an original principle of the mind, there are other laws of our nature which were plainly intended to secure the practice of veracity in our intercourse with our fellow-creatures. There are others, too, which, as they suppose the practice of this virtue, may be regarded as intimations of that conduct which is conformable to the end and destination of our being. Such is that disposition to repose faith in testimony, which is coeval with the use of language. Without such a disposition the education of children would be impracticable ; and accordingly, so far from being the result of experience, it seems to be, in the first instance, unlimited ; na-

ture intrusting its gradual correction to the progress of reason and of observation. This remark, which I think was first made by Dr Reid, has been since repeated and enforced by Mr Smith in the last edition of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.* This author observes farther, that, “ notwithstanding the
“ lessons of caution communicated to us by experience, there is scarcely a man to be found who is
“ not more credulous than he ought to be, and who
“ does not, upon many occasions, give credit to tales
“ which not only turn out to be perfectly false, but
“ which a very moderate degree of reflection and attention might have taught him could not well be
“ true. The natural disposition is always to believe. It is acquired wisdom and experience alone
“ that teach incredulity, and they very seldom teach
“ it enough. The wisest and most cautious of us
“ all frequently gives credit to stories which he
“ himself is afterwards both ashamed and astonished that he could possibly think of believing.” This disposition to repose faith in testimony bears a striking analogy, both in its origin and in its final cause, to our instinctive expectation of the continuance of those laws which regulate the course of physical events.

In infancy the principle of veracity is by no means so conspicuous as that of credulity, and it sometimes happens that a good deal of care is necessary to cherish it. But in such cases it will always be found that there is some indirect motive combined with the desire of social communication,

* See Vol. ii. p. 382.

such as fear, or vanity, or mischief, or sensuality. The same principle which prompts to social intercourse and to the use of speech, prompts also to veracity. Nor is it probable that there is such a thing as falsehood uttered merely from the love of falsehood.

If this remark be just, it suggests an important practical rule in the business of education :— Not to attempt the cure of lying and deceit by general rules concerning the duty of veracity, or by punishments inflicted upon every single violation of it, but by studying to discover and remove the radical evil from which it springs, whether it be cowardice, or vanity, or mischief, or selfishness, or sensuality. Either of these, if allowed to operate, will in time unhinge the natural constitution of the mind, and produce a disregard to truth upon all occasions where a temporary convenience can be gained by the breach of it.

From these imperfect hints, it would appear that every breach of veracity indicates some latent vice or some criminal intention, which an individual is ashamed to avow. And hence the peculiar beauty of openness or sincerity, uniting in some degree in itself the graces of all the other moral qualities of which it attests the existence.

Fidelity to promises, which is commonly regarded as a branch of veracity, is perhaps more properly a branch of justice ; but this is merely a question of arrangement, and of little consequence to our present purpose. If a person gives his promise, intending to perform, but fails in the execution, his

fault is strictly speaking a breach of justice. As there is a natural faith in testimony, so there is a natural expectation excited by a promise. When I excite this expectation, and lead other men to act accordingly, I convey a right to the performance of my promise, and I act unjustly if I fail in performing it.

If a person promises, not intending to perform, he is guilty of a complication of injustice and falsehood ; for although a declaration of present intention does not amount to a promise, every promise involves a declaration of present intention.

These observations may suffice with respect to the duties which have our fellow-creatures for their objects. I have by no means attempted a complete enumeration, which would have unavoidably engaged me in an illustration of the hackneyed topics of practical morality. What I had chiefly in view was to show, that, even among those duties which have a reference to mankind, there are several which cannot be resolved into that of benevolence.

The duties which I have mentioned are all independent of any particular relation between us and other men. But there are a great variety of other duties resulting from such relations ; the duties (for example) of Friendship and of Patriotism, besides those relative duties which moralists have distinguished by the titles of Economical and Political. To attempt an enumeration of these, would lead into the details of practical Ethics.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT OURSELVES.

General Remarks on this Class of our Duties.

PRUDENCE, temperance, and fortitude, are no less requisite for enabling us to discharge our social duties, than for securing our own private happiness : * But as they do not necessarily imply any reference to our fellow-creatures, they seem to belong most properly to this third branch of virtue

An illustration of the nature and tendency of these qualities, and of the means by which they are to be improved and confirmed, although a most important article of ethics, does not lead to any discussions of so abstract a kind, as to require particular attention in a work of which brevity is a principal object. It is sufficient here to remark, that, independently of all considerations of utility, either to ourselves or to others, these qualities are approved of as right and becoming. Their utility, at the same time, or rather necessity, for securing the discharge of our

* “ He who is qualified to promote the welfare of mankind,” (says Dr Ferguson,) “ is neither a sot, a fool, nor a coward.”
—Essay on the History of Civil Society, Part i. Sect. vi.

other duties, adds greatly to the respect they command, and is certainly the chief ground of the obligation we lie under, to cultivate the habits by which they are formed.

A steady regard, in the conduct of life, to the happiness and perfection of our own nature, and a diligent study of the means by which these ends may be attained, is another duty belonging to this branch of virtue. It is a duty so important and comprehensive, that it leads to the practice of all the rest, and is therefore entitled to a very full and particular examination in a system of Moral Philosophy. Such an examination, while it leads our thoughts “to the end and aim of our being,” will again bring under our review the various duties already considered; and by showing how they all conspire in recommending the same dispositions, will illustrate the unity of design in the human constitution, and the benevolent wisdom displayed in its formation. Other subordinate duties, besides, which it would be tedious to enumerate under separate titles, may thus be placed in a light more interesting and agreeable.

SECTION I.

Of the Duty of employing the means we possess to secure our own Happiness.

According to Dr Hutcheson, our conduct, so far as it is influenced by self-love, is never the ob-

ject of moral approbation. Even a regard to the pleasures of a good conscience he considered as detracting from the merit of those actions which it encourages us to perform.

That the principle of self-love (or, in other words, the desire of happiness,) is neither an object of approbation nor of blame, is sufficiently obvious. It is inseparable from the nature of man as a rational and a sensitive being. It is, however, no less obvious, on the other hand, that this desire, considered as a principle of action, has by no means an uniform influence on the conduct. Our animal appetites, our affections, and the other inferior principles of our nature, interfere as often with self-love as with benevolence, and mislead us from our own happiness as much as from the duties we owe to others.

In these cases every spectator pronounces, that we *deserve* to suffer for our folly and indiscretion; and we ourselves, as soon as the tumult of passion is over, feel in the same manner. Nor is this remorse merely a sentiment of regret for having missed that happiness which we might have enjoyed. We are dissatisfied, not only with our condition, but with our conduct;—with our having forfeited by our own imprudence what we might have attained.*

It is true that we do not feel so warm an indignation against the neglect of private good, as against perfidy, cruelty, and injustice. The reason proba-

* See Butler's Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue.

bly is, that imprudence commonly carries its own punishment along with it ; and our resentment is disarmed by pity. Indeed, as that habitual regard to his own happiness, which every man feels, except when under the influence of some violent appetite, is a powerful check on imprudence, it was less necessary to provide an additional punishment for this vice in the indignation of the world.

From the principles now stated, it follows, that, in a person who believes in a future state, the criminality of every bad action is aggravated by the imprudence with which it is accompanied.

It follows, also, that the punishments annexed by the civil magistrate to particular actions render the commission of them more criminal than it would otherwise be ; insomuch, that if an action, in itself perfectly indifferent, were prohibited by some arbitrary law, under a severe penalty, the commission of that action (unless we were called to it by some urgent consideration of duty,) would be criminal, not merely on account of the obedience which a subject owes to established authority, but on account of the regard which every man ought to feel for his life and reputation. To forge the handwriting of another with a fraudulent intention is undoubtedly a crime, independently of positive institutions ; and it becomes still more criminal in a commercial country like our's, on account of the extensive mischiefs which may arise from it. It is a crime, however, not of greater magnitude than many other kinds of commercial fraud that might be mentioned. If the

King, for example, grants his patent to a subject for a particular invention, and another counterfeits it, and makes use of his name, stamp, and coat of arms, he not only injures an individual, but imposes on the public. Abstracting, therefore, from positive law, the criminality of the latter act is fully as great as that of the former. As the law, however, has made the one act capital, and the other not, but only subjected the person who commits it to pecuniary damages to the individual he has injured, the forgery of a deed becomes incomparably more criminal in a moral view than the counterfeit of a patent invention. A good man, indeed, will neither do the one nor the other. But the man who adds to a fraudulent disposition an imprudent disregard to his own life and character, is undoubtedly the more guilty of the two, and meets his fate with much less sympathy from others than he would receive, if he had committed the same act without knowing its consequences.

SECTION II.

Of Happiness. Systems of the Grecian Schools on the Subject.

The most superficial observation of life is sufficient to convince us, that Happiness is not to be attained by giving every appetite and desire the gratification they demand; and that it is necessary for

us to form to ourselves some plan or system of conduct, in subordination to which all other objects are to be pursued.

To ascertain what this system ought to be, is a problem which has in all ages employed the speculations of philosophers. Among the ancients the question concerning the SOVEREIGN GOOD was the principal subject of controversy which divided the schools; and it was treated in such a manner, as to involve almost every other question of ethics. The opinions maintained with respect to it by some of their sects, comprehend many of the most important truths to which the inquiry leads, and leave little to be added, but a few corrections and limitations of their conclusions.

These opinions may be all reduced to *three*; those of the Epicureans, of the Stoics, and of the Peripatetics: And, indeed, it does not seem possible to form a conception of any scheme of happiness which may not be referred to one or other of these three systems.

I.

The fundamental principle of the Epicurean system was, that bodily pleasure and pain were the sole ultimate objects of desire and aversion. These were desired and shunned on their own account; everything else from its tendency to procure the one of these or to save us from the other. *Power,*

(for example,) *riches*, *reputation*, even the *virtues* themselves, were not desirable for their own sake, but were valuable merely as being instrumental to procure us the objects of our natural desires. “ They
 “ who place the *sovereign good* in *virtue* alone, and
 “ who, dazzled by words, overlook the intentions of
 “ nature, will be delivered from this greatest of all
 “ errors if they will only listen to Epicurus. As to
 “ these rare and excellent qualities on which you
 “ set so high a value, who is there that would con-
 “ sider them as objects either of praise or of imita-
 “ tion, unless from a belief that they are instrumen-
 “ tal in adding to the sum of our pleasures? For
 “ as we prize the medical art, not on its own ac-
 “ count, but as subservient to the preservation of
 “ health, and the art of the pilot, not for the skill
 “ he displays, but as it diminishes the dangers of
 “ navigation, so also *wisdom*, which is the art of
 “ living, would be coveted by none if it were alto-
 “ gether unprofitable, whereas, now, it is an object
 “ of general pursuit, from a persuasion that it both
 “ guides us to our best enjoyments, and points out
 “ to us the most effectual means for their attain-
 “ ment.”*

* “ Qui summum bonum in una virtute ponunt, et splendore
 “ nominis capti, quid natura postulet, non intelligunt, errore
 “ maximo si Epicurum audire voluerint liberabuntur. Istæ enim
 “ vestræ eximiæ, pulchræque virtutes, nisi voluptatem effice-
 “ rent, quis eas aut laudabiles aut expetendas arbitraretur? Ut
 “ enim medicorum scientiam non ipsius artis, sed bonæ valetu-
 “ dinis causa probamus; et gubernatores ars, quia bene navi-

In the passage which immediately follows this quotation, Cicero proceeds to state particularly the reasonings of Epicurus concerning the different *virtues*, which he has done not only in a manner extremely pleasing and interesting, but completely satisfactory. Indeed I do not know of anything more valuable that the ancients have left us than these philosophical works of Cicero, considered as authentic records of the ethical disquisitions of the Grecian schools. *

All the pleasures and pains of the *mind* (according to Epicurus) are derived from the recollection and anticipation of *bodily* pleasures and pains ; but this recollection and anticipation he considered as contributing much more to our happiness or misery on the whole, than the pleasures and pains themselves. His philosophy was indeed directed chiefly to inculcate this truth, and to withdraw our solicitude from the pleasures and pains themselves which are not in our power, to the regulation of

“gandi rationem habet, utilitate non arte laudatur ; sic sapientia, quæ ars vivendi putanda est, non expeteretur, si nihil efficeret ; nunc expetitur, quod est tanquam artifex conquiritur et comparandæ voluptatis.”—(Cicero De Fin. i. 13.)

* The Philosophical Works of Cicero were so highly valued by Mr Smith, that, when he was Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, he made the Books De Finibus the subject of a separate course of lectures, which he gave annually to his students. Of these lectures (in delivering which he trusted entirely to extempore elocution,) I have heard some of his pupils who were very competent to judge, speak with enthusiastic admiration ; among others Mr Millar, Professor of Law, Lord Cullen, and Lord Craig.

our recollections and anticipations, which depend upon ourselves. He placed happiness, therefore, in ease of body and tranquillity of mind, but much more in the latter than in the former, insomuch that he affirmed a wise man might be happy in the midst of bodily torments. “Hear” (says Cicero) “the language of Epicurus on his deathbed. Epicurus to Hermachus, greeting. While I am passing the last day of my life, and *that* the happiest, I write this epistle, oppressed at the same time with so many and such acute maladies, that it is scarcely possible to conceive that my sufferings are susceptible of augmentation. All these, however, are amply compensated by the mental joy I derive from the recollection of the reasonings and discoveries of which I am the author.”* The concluding sentence of the letter does more honour to Epicurus than any other part of it. “But *you*, as is worthy of your good will towards me and philosophy, let it be your business to consider yourself as the guardian and protector of the children of Metrodorus.” †

* Audi moriens quid dicat Epicurus.—“Epicurus Hermacho S.—Cum ageremus (inquit) vitæ beatum et eundem supremum diem scribebamus hæc. Tanti autem morbi aderant vesicæ et viscerum, ut nihil ad eorum magnitudinem possit accedere. Compensabatur tamen cum his omnibus animi lætitia, quam capiebam memoriâ rationum inventorumque nostrorum.”—(De Fin. ii. 30.)

† “Sed tu ut dignum est tua erga me, et erga philosophiam voluntate ab adolescentulo suscepta, fac ut Metrodori tueare liberos.”—(Ibid.) The same letter is to be found in Diogenes Laertius, Lib. x.

It is unnecessary for me to enter into a particular examination of these doctrines, which have been obviously suggested by that excessive love of simplicity in the explanation of appearances which has given rise to so many erroneous theories both in physics and morals. The system of Epicurus, however, (although it places morality on a wrong foundation, and employs a language with respect to happiness very liable to abuse,—a language which, (as Cicero remarks “ savours of nothing magnificent, “ nothing generous,”) * bears at least very honourable testimony to the tendency of the virtues to promote happiness even in *this* life, since he imagined it was from *this* tendency they derived all their value. And accordingly, Mr Smith remarks, that “ Cicero, the great enemy of the Epicurean system, “ borrows from it his most agreeable proofs, that “ virtue alone is sufficient to secure happiness. And “ Seneca, though a stoic, the sect most opposite to “ that of Epicurus, yet quotes this philosopher more “ frequently than any other.”

Epicurus himself is represented as a person of inoffensive and even amiable manners. He is said to have taught his philosophy in a garden, where he lived a temperate and quiet life, enjoying what Thomson calls “ the glad poetic ease of Epicurus,—seldom understood.” He died at an advanced age, and was so much beloved and esteemed by his followers that his birth-day was annually celebrated as a festival. His private virtues,

* “ Nihil magnificum, nihil generosum sapit.”

however, were probably in a great measure the effect of a happy natural constitution; for his philosophy, besides destroying all those supports of morality that religion affords, tended avowedly to recommend a life of indolent and selfish indulgence, and a total abstraction from the concerns and duties of the world. Accordingly we find that many of his disciples brought so much discredit on their principles, by the dissoluteness of their lives, that the word *Epicurean* came gradually to be understood as characteristical of a person devoted to sensual gratifications. It is worthy of remark, too, that it was from the speculative opinions of this sect that the looseness of their moral principles arose; or rather, the former were inculcated with a view to the justification of the latter. Such was the reasoning of Trimalcio, (in Petronius,) who, when a servant had brought into the banquet a silver skeleton and set it on the table, exclaimed,

Heu, heu nos miseros ! quam totus homuncio nil est !
 Sic erimus cuncti, postquam nos auferet Orcus ;
 Ergo vivamus, dum licet esse, bene.

The same sentiment is well expressed by Cowley in an imitation of Anacreon.

Crown me with roses whilst I live,
 Now your wines and ointments give :
 After death I nothing crave ;
 All are stoics in the grave.

The influence which these principles had on the

manners of the later Romans has been remarked by many writers ; and it is not a little curious that it was clearly foreseen ages before by their virtuous and enlightened progenitors. This fact, which has not been sufficiently attended to, deserves the serious consideration of those who are disposed to call in question the effect of speculative opinions on national character. I shall make no apology, therefore, for entering into some slight details upon the subject.

It was in the year of Rome 471, and during the consulate of Fabricius, that the Romans seem to have received the first notice of the Epicurean doctrines. At that period the Tarentines had the address to instigate the Samnites and almost all the other Italian states, to take arms against the republic, and also prevailed on Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, to give them his assistance. In the course of the war, Fabricius, with two other persons of high rank, were sent to Pyrrhus's court, to treat with him about an exchange of prisoners ; and it was at a public entertainment given to them upon that occasion that Cineas, his minister and favourite, gave the Roman ambassadors a general idea of the philosophical principles which Epicurus had begun to teach at Athens about twenty years before.

The effect which this conversation had on the minds of the Roman ambassadors is an instructive fact in the history of philosophy. We are often desirous to know how a particular opinion would strike a man of plain understanding the

first time it was proposed to him. It is an experiment, however, that we have but seldom an opportunity of making, as it is impossible to make the vulgar comprehend the terms of a speculative controversy, and as the judgments of the learned are commonly in some degree warped by education. An opinion, however absurd, that we have been accustomed to hear from infancy, and with which we connect the names of men eminent for genius and knowledge, even although we should reject it as erroneous, may still have some influence in unsettling our notions, and certainly will not appear to us so palpably ridiculous as it would do to a person to whom it is altogether new. The rage of disputation which prevailed in Greece seems in this way to have hurt the understandings of some of their best philosophers; and the case is but too similar with many in modern Europe. It is curious, therefore, to consider the light in which the philosophy of Epicurus appeared to Fabricius and his friends;—men of cultivated minds, and at the same time unperturbed by the refinements of sophistry, and perfectly acquainted, both from their own experience and the observation of their countrymen, with those practical principles which are favourable to active and heroic virtue. With respect to this point Cicero has enabled us to form a judgment from the following anecdote, which he has recorded in his *Treatise on Old Age*.

“ I have frequently heard from some of my
“ friends, who were much my seniors,” (says Cato

“ to Scipio and Lælius,) a traditionary anecdote concerning Fabricius. They assured me, that, in the early part of their life, they were told by certain very old men of their acquaintance, that when Fabricius was ambassador at the court of Pyrrhus he expressed great astonishment at the account given him by Cineas of a philosopher at Athens, who maintained that the love of pleasure was universally the leading motive of all human actions. My informer added, that, when Fabricius related this fact to M. Curius and Titus Coruncanius, they both joined in wishing that Pyrrhus and the whole Sannite nations might become converts to this extraordinary doctrine, as the people who were infected with such unmanly principles could not fail, they thought, of proving an easy conquest to their enemies. M. Curius had been intimately connected with Publius Decius, who, in his fourth consulate, (which was five years before the former entered upon that office,) gloriously sacrificed his life to the preservation of his country. This generous patriot was personally known both to Fabricius and to Coruncanius; and they were convinced, by what they experienced in their own breasts, as well as by the illustrious example of Decius, that there is in certain actions an intrinsic rectitude and obligation which, with a noble contempt of what the world calls *pleasure*, every great and generous mind, will steadily keep in view, as a sacred rule of conduct, and as the chief concern of life.” *

* See Melmoth's Translation of Cicero in Old Age.

To this anecdote it may not be improper to add another which occurs in a later period of the Roman history. In the year of Rome 599, the Athenians sent to that city a deputation of three of their principal philosophers, at the head of whom was Carneades, a celebrated patron of the academical sect. While the ambassadors were waiting for their answer, Carneades amused himself in displaying his ingenuity and eloquence to the Roman youth, by endeavouring to prove that justice and injustice derived their origin from positive institutions, and that there was no foundation for a distinction between them in the nature of man. The following day, according to the practice of his sect, he took up the opposite side of the question, and attempted to refute his former reasonings. Cato, the censor, was present on both occasions, and was so apprehensive of the consequences of unsettling the opinions of his countrymen on points of so important and sacred a nature, that he never rested till the ambassadors received their final answer, and were dismissed from Rome. *

* Ibid.

The system of morals generally ascribed to Epicurus is said to have been borrowed from Aristippus, who also taught that happiness consisted in bodily pleasure ; but it is probable, as Mr Smith observes, that his manner of applying his principles was altogether his own.—(Theory, &c. Vol. II. p. 268.) Indeed, we have the testimony of Diogenes Laertius that Aristippus taught that happiness consisted in the *present* pleasures of the body, and not in any mental refinements on these pleasures, according to the system of Epicurus.—Laertius, II. 187. The life

II.

In opposition to the Epicurean doctrines already stated on the subject of happiness, the stoics placed the supreme good in rectitude of conduct, without any regard to the event. They did not, however, as has been often supposed, recommend an indifference to external objects, or a life of inactivity and apathy. On the contrary, they taught that nature pointed out to us certain objects of choice and of rejection, and amongst these some to be *more* chosen and avoided than others; and that virtue consisted in choosing and rejecting objects according to their intrinsic value. They admitted that health was to be preferred to sickness, riches to poverty; the prosperity of our family, of our friends, of our country, to their adversity; and they allowed, nay, they recommended, the most strenuous exertions to accomplish these desirable ends. They only contended these objects should be pursued not as the constituents of our happiness, but because we believe it to be agreeable to nature that we should pursue them; and that, therefore, when we have done our utmost, we should regard the event as indifferent.

That this is a fair representation of the stoical doctrine has been fully proved by Mr Harris in the very

of Epicurus has been written in modern times by Gassendi, who attempted to revive his philosophy, and by Bayle. Heineccius also mentions a book entitled, Jacob Rondellus, de Vita et de Moribus Epicuri, which has never fallen in my way. (Amst. 1684.)

learned and judicious notes on his *Dialogue concerning Happiness*; a performance which, although not entirely free from Mr Harris's peculiarities of thought and style, does him so much honour, both as a writer and a moralist, that we cannot help regretting, while we peruse it, that he should so often have wasted his ingenuity and learning upon scholastic subtilties, equally inapplicable to the pursuits of science, and to the business of life.

“The word *παθος*,” (he observes,) “which we usually render *a passion*, means, in the stoic sense, *a perturbation*, and is always so translated by Cicero; and the epithet *απαθης*, when applied to the *wise man*, does not mean an exemption from passion, but an exemption from that perturbation which is founded on erroneous opinions. The testimony of Epictetus is express to this purpose. I am not, says he, to be apathetic like a statue, but I am withal to observe relations both the natural and adventitious; as the man of religion, as the son, as the brother, as the father, as the citizen. And immediately before he tells us, That a perturbation in no other way ever arises but either when a desire is frustrated, or an aversion falls into that which it should avoid.” In which passage” (says Harris) “it is observable that he does not make either desire, or aversion, *παθη*, or perturbations, but only the cause of perturbations when erroneously conducted.”

From a great variety of passages, which it is unnecessary for me to transcribe, Harris concludes

that “ the stoics, in the character of their virtuous
 “ man, included rational desire, aversion, and ex-
 “ ultation ; included love and parental affection,
 “ friendship, and a general benevolence to all man-
 “ kind ; and considered it as a duty arising from
 “ our very nature not to neglect the welfare of pub-
 “ lic society, but to be ever ready, according to our
 “ rank, to act either as the magistrate or as the pri-
 “ vate citizen.”

Nor did they exclude wealth from among the ob-
 jects of choice. The stoic Hecato, in his *Treatise*
of Offices quoted by Cicero, tells us, “ That a wise
 “ man, while he abstains from doing anything con-
 “ trary to the customs, laws, and institutions of his
 “ country, ought to attend to his own fortune. For
 “ we do not desire to be rich for ourselves only, but
 “ for our children, relations, and friends, and espe-
 “ cially for the commonwealth, inasmuch as the
 “ riches of individuals are the wealth of a state.” *—
 “ Nay,” (says Cicero,) “ if the wise man could mend
 “ his condition by adding to the amplest possessions
 “ the poorest, meanest utensil, he would in no de-
 “ gree condemn it.” †

From these quotations it sufficiently appears

* “ Sapiētis esse, nihil contra mores, leges, instituta facien-
 “ tem, habere rationem rei familiaris. Neque enim solum no-
 “ bis divites esse volumus, sed liberis, propinquis, amicis,
 “ maximeque reipublicæ ; singulorum enim facultates et copię
 “ divitiæ sunt civitatis.”—*De Off.* iii. 15.

† “ Si ad illam vitam, quæ cum virtute degatur, ampulla aut
 “ strigilis accedat, sumpturum sapientem eam vitam potius, cui
 “ hæc adjecta sint.”—*De Finibus*, iv. 12.

that the stoical system, so far from withdrawing men from the duties of life, was eminently favourable to active virtue. Its peculiar and distinguishing tenet was, that our happiness did not depend on the attainment of the objects of our choice, but on the part that we acted; but this principle was inculcated *not* to damp our exertions, but to lead us to rest our happiness only on circumstances which we ourselves could command. "If I am going to sail" (says Epictetus) "I choose the best ship and the best pilot, and I wait for the fairest weather that my circumstances and duty will allow. Prudence and propriety, the principles which the gods have given me for the direction of my conduct, require this of me, but they require no more; and if, notwithstanding, a storm arises, which neither the strength of the vessel nor the skill of the pilot are likely to withstand, I give myself no trouble about the consequences. All that I had to do is done already. The directors of my conduct never command me to be miserable, to be anxious, desponding, or afraid. Whether we are to be drowned or come to a harbour is the business of Jupiter, not mine. I leave it entirely to his determination, nor ever break my rest with considering which way he is likely to decide it, but receive whatever comes with equal indifference and security." *

We may observe farther, in favour of this noble

* Smith's Translation. Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. pp. 223, 224.

system, that the scale of desirable objects which it exhibited was peculiarly calculated to encourage the social virtues. It represented indeed (in common with the theory of Epicurus) *self-love* as the great spring of human actions ; but in the application of this erroneous principle to practice, its doctrines were favourable to the most enlarged, nay, to the most disinterested benevolence. It taught that the prosperity of *two* was preferable to that of *one* ; that of a city to that of a family ; and that of our country to all partial considerations. It was upon this very principle, added to a sublime sentiment of piety, that it founded its chief argument for an entire resignation to the dispensations of Providence. As all events are ordered by perfect wisdom and goodness, the stoics concluded, that whatever happens is calculated to produce the greatest good possible to the universe in general. As it is agreeable to nature, therefore, that we should prefer the happiness of many to a few, and of all to that of many, they concluded that every event which happens is precisely that which we ourselves would have desired, if we had been acquainted with the whole scheme of the Divine administration. “ In what sense” (says Epictetus) “ are
“ some things said to be according to our nature,
“ and others contrary to it? It is in that sense in
“ which we consider ourselves as separated and de-
“ tached from all other things. For thus it may
“ be said to be the nature of the foot to be always
“ clean. But if you consider it as a foot, and not

“ as something detached from the rest of the body,
 “ it must behove it sometimes to trample in the
 “ dirt, and sometimes to tread upon thorns, and
 “ sometimes, too, to be cut off for the sake of the
 “ whole body ; and if it refuses this it is no longer
 “ a foot. Thus, too, ought we to conceive with re-
 “ spect to ourselves. What are you ? A man. If
 “ you consider yourself as something separated and
 “ detached, it is agreeable to your nature to live to
 “ old age, to be rich, to be in health. But if you
 “ consider yourself as a man, and as a part of the
 “ whole, upon account of that whole it will behove
 “ you sometimes to be in sickness, sometimes to be
 “ exposed to the inconveniency of a sea voyage,
 “ sometimes to be in want, and at last perhaps to
 “ die before your time. Why then do you com-
 “ plain ? Don’t you know that by doing so, as the
 “ foot ceases to be a foot, so you cease to be a
 “ man.”

“ Oh world,” (says Antoninus,) “ all things are
 “ suitable to me which are suitable to thee. No-
 “ thing is too early or too late for me which is sea-
 “ sonable for thee. All is fruit to me which thy
 “ seasons bring forth. From thee are all things ;
 “ in thee are all things ; for thee are all things.
 “ Shall any man say, O beloved city of Cecrops !
 “ and wilt not thou say, O beloved city of God !” *

In this tendency of the stoical philosophy to en-
 courage the active and social virtues, it was most

* Smith’s Translation. Theory of Moral Sentiments, Vol. II.
 pp. 254, 255.

remarkably distinguished from the system of Epicurus. The latter, indeed, seems (as it was first taught,) to have been the reverse of that system of sensuality and of libertinism, to which the epithet *Epicurean* is commonly applied in modern times ; but it was at best a system of selfishness and prudent indulgence, which placed happiness in a seclusion from care, and in an indifference to all the concerns of mankind. By the stoics, on the contrary, virtue was supposed to consist in the affectionate performance of every good office towards their fellow-creatures, and in full resignation to Providence for every thing independent of their own choice.

It is remarked by Dr Ferguson that “ their different schemes of theology clearly pointed out their opposite plans of morality also. Both admitted the existence of God. But to one the Deity was a retired essence enjoying *itself*, and far removed from any work of creation and Providence.

“ The other considered the Deity as the principle of existence and of order in the universe, from whom all intelligence proceeds, and to whom all intelligence will return ; whose power is the irresistible energy of wisdom and of goodness, ever present and ever active ; bestowing on man the faculty of reason and the freedom of choice, that he may learn, in acting for the general good, to imitate the Divine nature ; and that, in respect of events independent of his will, he may acquiesce in the determination of Providence.”

“ In conformity with these principles one sect recommended seclusion from all the cares of family or state. The other recommended an active part in all the concerns of our fellow-creatures, and the steady exertion of a mind benevolent, courageous, and temperate. *Here* the sects essentially differed, *not* in words, as has sometimes been alleged, but in the views which they entertained of a plan for the conduct of human life. The Epicurean was a deserter from the cause of his fellow-creatures, and might justly be reckoned a traitor to the community of nature, of mankind, and even of his country.”

“ The stoic enlisted himself as a willing instrument in the hand of God for the good of his fellow-creatures. For himself, the cares and attentions which this object required were his *pleasures*, and the continued exertion of a beneficent affection, his *welfare* and his prosperity.” *

Such was the philosophy of the stoics ;—“ a philosophy” (says Mr Smith) “ which affords the noblest lessons of magnanimity, is the best school of heroes and patriots ; and to the greater part of whose precepts there can be no other objection but this honourable one, that they teach us to aim at a perfection altogether beyond the reach of human nature.”

I cannot, however, help remarking, that this is by no means an *objection* to their system ; for it is the

* Principles of Moral and Political Science, Vol. II. pp. 4, 5.
—See also Dr Ferguson’s Roman History, chap. 18.

business of the moralist to exhibit a standard far above the reach of our possible attainments. If he did otherwise, he must recommend errors and imperfections. “It has sometimes happened” (says Quintilian, speaking of eloquence and the fine arts, and the observation holds equally with respect to every other pursuit,) “that great things have been accomplished by him who was striving at what was above his power.” * To the same purpose it is well said by Seneca. “It is the mark of a generous spirit to aim at what is lofty ; to attempt what is arduous ; and ever to keep in view what it is impossible for the most splendid talents to accomplish.” †

The stoics themselves were sensible of the weaknesses inseparable from humanity. “Neither in deed” (says Cicero, speaking the language of a stoic,) “when the two Decii or the two Scipios are mentioned as *brave men*, nor when Aristides or Fabricius are denominated *just*, is an example of fortitude in the former, or of justice in the latter, proposed as exactly conformable to the precepts of wisdom. For none of them were *wise* in that sense in which we apply the epithet to the *wise man*. Nor were Cato and Lælius such, although they were honoured with the appellation. No,

* “Evenit non nunquam, ut aliquid grande inveniat, qui semper quærit quod nimium est.”—Inst. ii. 12.

† “Generosa res est—conari alta, tentare et mente majora concipere, quam quæ etiam ingenti animo adornatis effici possint.”—De vita Beata, c. 20.

“ not even the seven wise men of Greece who have
 “ been so widely celebrated, although, *from the ha-*
 “ *bitual discharge of middle duties, (ex mediorum*
 “ *officiorum frequentia,*) all of them bore a certain
 “ similitude to the ideal character.” * Seneca also
 mentions it as a general confession of the greatest
 philosophers, that the doctrine they taught was not
 “ quemadmodum ipsi viverent, sed quemadmodum
 “ vivendum est.” † “ I know” (says Epictetus)
 “ that I shall not be Milo, and yet I neglect not my
 “ body ; nor Cræsus, and yet I neglect not my
 “ estate ; nor in general do we desist from the pro-
 “ per care of anything through despair of arriving
 “ at that which is supreme.” ‡

In the writings indeed of some of the stoics, we
 meet with some absurd and violent paradoxes about
 the perfect felicity of the wise man on the one hand,
 and the *equality of misery* among all those who fall
 short of this ideal character on the other. “ As all
 “ the actions of the wise man were perfect, so all
 “ those of the man who had not arrived at this su-

* “ Nec vero, cum duo Decii, aut duo Scipiones, fortes viri
 “ commemorantur, aut cum Fabricius, Aristidesve justus nomi-
 “ natur ; aut ab illis fortitudinis : aut ab his justitiæ tamquam
 “ a sapientibus, petitur exemplum. Nemo enim horum *sic sa-*
 “ *pientis est, ut sapientem volumus intelligi.* Nec ii qui sapientes
 “ habiti sunt et nominati, M. Cato et C. Lælius, sapientes fue-
 “ runt ; ne illi quidem septem : Sed ex mediorum officiorum
 “ frequentia similitudinem quandam gerebant, speciemque sa-
 “ pientum.”—De Offic. L. iii. c. 4.

† De Vita Beata, c. 18.

‡ Arr. Epict. L. i. c. 2.

“ preme wisdom were faulty and equally faulty. As
 “ one truth could not be more true, nor one false-
 “ hood more false than another, so an honourable
 “ action could not be more honourable, nor a shame-
 “ ful one more shameful than another. As in shoot-
 “ ing at a mark, the man who had missed it by an
 “ inch had equally missed it with him who had done
 “ so by an hundred yards, so the man who, in what
 “ appeared to us the most insignificant action, had
 “ acted improperly, and without a sufficient reason,
 “ was equally faulty with him who had done so in
 “ what appears to us the most important ; the man
 “ who has killed a cock (for example) improperly,
 “ and without a sufficient reason, with him who had
 “ murdered his father.

“ It is not, however,” (continues Mr Smith) “ by
 “ any means probable that these paradoxes formed a
 “ part of the original principles of *stoicism*, as taught
 “ by Zeno and Cleanthes. It is much more probable
 “ that they were added to it by their disciple, Chrysip-
 “ pus, whose genius seems to have been more fitted for
 “ systematizing the doctrines of his preceptors, and
 “ adorning them with the imposing appendages of
 “ artificial definitions and divisions, than for imbib-
 “ ing the sublime spirit which they breathed. Such
 “ a man may very easily be supposed to have un-
 “ derstood too literally some animated and exagge-
 “ rated expressions of his masters in describing the
 “ happiness of the man of perfect virtue, and the
 “ unhappiness of whatever fell short of that charac-
 “ ter.”

That these paradoxes were not adopted by the most rational admirers of the stoical philosophy we have complete evidence ; for we find them treating expressly of those *imperfect* virtues which are attained by inferior proficient in wisdom, and which they did not dignify with the name of *rectitudes*, but distinguished by the epithets of *proper*, *fit*, and *decent*.

Such virtues are called by Cicero *officia*, and by Seneca *convenientia*. They are treated of by Cicero in his *Offices*, and are said to have been the subject of a book (now lost) by Marcus Brutus.

This apology, however, it must be confessed, will not extend to all the errors of the stoical school. In particular, it will not extend to the notions it inculcated on the subject of *suicide*. But for these errors, if it is impossible to apologize, we may at least account in some measure by the peculiar circumstances of the times when this philosophy arose, and which infected with the same spirit, though perhaps not in an equal degree, the peaceable and indolent followers of Epicurus. “During the age” (says Mr Smith) “in which flourished the founders of
“all the principal sects of ancient philosophy:—dur-
“ing the Peloponnesian war, and for many ages after
“its conclusion,—all the different republics of Greece
“were at home almost always distracted by the
“most furious factions, and abroad involved in the
“most sanguinary wars, in which each sought not
“merely superiority or dominion, but either com-
“pletely to extirpate all its enemies, or, what was

“ not less cruel, to reduce them into the vilest of all
“ states—that of domestic slavery. The smallness
“ of the greater part of those states, too, rendered
“ it to each of them no very improbable event, that
“ it might itself fall into that very calamity which
“ it had so frequently inflicted or attempted to in-
“ flict on its neighbours. In this disorderly state
“ of things the most perfect innocence, joined to the
“ highest rank and the greatest services to the
“ public, could give no security to any man, that
“ even at home and among his fellow-citizens, he
“ was not, at some time or other, from the preva-
“ lence of some hostile and furious faction, to be
“ condemned to the most cruel and ignominious
“ punishment. If he was taken prisoner of war,
“ or if the city of which he was a member was con-
“ quered, he was exposed, if possible, to still greater
“ injuries. As an American savage, therefore, pre-
“ pares his death-song, and considers how he should
“ act when he has fallen into the hands of his ene-
“ mies, and is by them put to death in the most
“ lingering tortures, and amidst the insults and de-
“ risions of all the spectators, so a Grecian patriot
“ or hero could not avoid frequently employing his
“ thoughts in considering what he ought both to
“ suffer and to do in banishment, in captivity, when
“ reduced to slavery, when put to the torture,
“ when brought to the scaffold. It was the busi-
“ ness of their philosophers to prepare the death-
“ song which the Grecian patriots and heroes might
“ make use of on the proper occasions ; and of all

“ the different sects it must, I think, be acknowledged,
 “ that the stoics had prepared by far the most ani-
 “ mated and spirited song.” *

After all, it is impossible to deny that there is some foundation for a censure which Lord Bacon has somewhere passed on this celebrated sect. “Cer-
 “ tainly” (says he) “ the stoics bestowed too much
 “ cost on death, and by their preparations made it
 “ more fearful.” At least, I suspect this may be the tendency of *some* passages in their writings, in such a state of society as that in which we live ; but in perusing them we ought always to remember the circumstances of those men to whom they were addressed, and which are so eloquently described in the observations just quoted from Mr Smith. The practical reflection which Bacon adds to this censure is invaluable, and is strictly conformable to the spirit of the stoical system, although he seems to state it by way of contrast to their principles.
 “ It is as natural” (says he) “ to die as to be born ;
 “ and to a little infant perhaps the one is as pain-
 “ ful as the other. HE THAT DIES IN AN EAR-
 “ NEST PURSUIT IS LIKE ONE THAT IS WOUND-
 “ ED IN HOT BLOOD, WHO FOR A TIME SCARCE
 “ FEELS THE HURT ; AND THEREFORE A MIND
 “ FIXED AND BENT UPON SOMEWHAT THAT IS
 “ GOOD DOTH BEST AVERT THE DOLOURS OF
 “ DEATH.”

Upon the whole, notwithstanding the imperfections of this system, and the paradoxes which dis-

* Moral Sentiments, Vol. II. p. 236.

grace it in some accounts of it that have descended to our times, it cannot be disputed, that its leading doctrines are agreeable to the purest principles of morality and religion. Indeed, they all terminate in one maxim : That we should not make the attainment of things external an ultimate object, but place the business of life in doing our duty, and leave the care of our happiness to him who made us. Nor does the whole merit of these doctrines consist in their purity. It is doing them no more than justice to say, that they were more completely systematical in all their parts, and more ingeniously, as well as eloquently, supported, than any thing else that remains of ancient philosophy.

I must not conclude these observations on the Stoical system, without taking notice of the practical effects it produced on the characters of many of its professors. It was the precepts of this school which rendered the supreme power in the hands of Marcus Aurelius a blessing to the human race ; and which secured the private happiness, and elevated the minds of Helvidius and Thræsea under a tyranny by which their country was oppressed. Nor must it be forgotten, that in the last struggles of Roman liberty, while the school of Epicurus produced Cæsar, that of Zeno produced Cato and Brutus. The one sacrificed mankind to himself ; the others sacrificed themselves to mankind.

—Hi mores, hæc duri immota Catonis
Secta fuit, servare modum, finemque tenere.

Naturamque sequi, patriæque impendere vitam ;
Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo. *

The sentiment of *President Montesquieu* on this subject is well known. “Never” (says he,) “were
“any principles more worthy of human nature, and
“more proper to form the good citizen, than those
“of the stoics ; and if I could for a moment cease
“to recollect that I am a Christian, I should not be
“able to hinder myself from ranking the destruc-
“tion of the sect of Zeno among the misfortunes
“that have befallen the human race.” †

III.

The doctrine of the *Peripatetics* on this subject appears to have coincided with that of the *Pythagorean* school, who defined *happiness* to be “*the exercise of virtue in a prosperous life ;*” (*χρησις αρετης εν ευτυχια*) ;—a definition like several others transmitted to us from the same source, which

* *Lucan. Phars. Lib. ii. l. 380.*

† “Les diverses sectes de philosophie chez les anciens étoient des espèces de religion. Il n’y en a jamais eu dont les principes fussent plus dignes de l’homme et plus propre à former des gens de bien, que celle des Stoïciens ; et si je pouvois un moment cesser de penser que je suis Chrétien, je ne pourrois m’empêcher de mettre la destruction de la secte de Zénon au nombre des malheurs du genre-humain.”—*Esprit des Loix, Liv. xxiv. chap. 10.*

unites in a remarkable degree the merits of conciseness and of philosophical precision.

In confirmation of this doctrine, the Pythagorean school observed, that it was not the *mere possession* but the *exercise* of virtue that made men happy.* And for the proper exercise of virtue, they thought that good fortune was as necessary as light is for the exercise of the faculty of sight. The utmost length, accordingly, which they went was to say, that the virtuous man in adversity was *not miserable*; whereas the vicious and foolish were miserable in all situations of fortune. In another passage they say, that the difference between God and man is, that God is perfect in himself, and needs nothing from without; whereas the nature of man is imperfect and defective, and dependent on external circumstances. Although, therefore, we possess virtue, that is but the perfection of *one* part, namely, the mind; but as we consist both of body and mind, the body also must be perfect of its kind. Nor is that alone sufficient; but the prosperous exercise of virtue requires certain *externals*; such as wealth, reputation, friends, and, above all, a *well-constituted state*; for without that the rational and social animal is imperfect, and unable to fulfil the purposes of its nature.

The difference between the *Peripatetics* and *Stoics* in these opinions is beautifully stated by Cicero, in a passage strongly expressive of the elevation of his

* See the Fragments of this School, published in Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica, Physica, et Ethica*. Amstel. 1688.

own character, as well as highly honourable to the two sects, whose doctrines, while he *contrasts* them with each other, he plainly considered as both originating in the same pure and ardent zeal for the interests of morality. “Pugnant Stoici cum Peripateticis, alteri negant quidquam bonum esse nisi si quod honestum sit; alteri longe longeque plurimum se attribuire honestati; sed tamen et in corpore et extra esse quædam bona. Certamen honestum, et disputatio splendida.”

On a general review of the preceding articles in this section, it appears, (to use the words of Dr Ferguson,) that all these sects acknowledged the necessity of virtue, or allowed, that, in every well-directed pursuit of happiness, the strictest regard to morality was required. The Stoics alone maintained that this regard itself was happiness; or that to run the course of an active, strenuous, wise, and beneficent mind, was itself the very good which we ought to pursue.

SECTION III.

Additional Remarks on Happiness.

From the slight view now given of the systems of philosophers with respect to the Sovereign Good, it may be assumed as an acknowledged and indisputable fact, that happiness arises chiefly from the mind. The Stoics undoubtedly expressed this too strongly when they said, that to a wise man external circumstances are indifferent. Yet it must

be confessed, that happiness depends much less on these than is commonly imagined; and that, as there is no situation so prosperous as to exclude the torments of malice, cowardice, and remorse, so there is none so adverse as to withhold the enjoyments of a benevolent, resolute, and upright heart.

If, from the sublime idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, we descend to such characters as the world presents to us, some important limitations of the Stoical conclusions become necessary. Mr Hume has justly remarked, that, “as in the bodily system, a *toothach* produces more violent convulsions of pain than *phthisis* or a *dropsy*, so, in the economy of the mind, although all vice be pernicious, yet the disturbance or pain is not measured out by nature with exact proportion to the degree of vice; nor is the man of highest virtue, even abstracting from external accidents, always the most happy. A gloomy and melancholy disposition is certainly to our sentiments a vice or imperfection; but as it may be accompanied with a great sense of honour and great integrity, it may be found in very worthy characters; though it is sufficient alone to embitter life, and render the person afflicted with it completely miserable. On the other hand, a selfish villain may possess a spring and alacrity of temper, a certain *gaiety of heart*, which is rewarded much beyond its merit; and when attended with good fortune, will compensate for the uneasiness and remorse arising from all the other vices.”

Abstracting even from these considerations, and supposing a character as perfect as the frailty of human nature admits of, various mental qualities, which have no immediate connection with moral desert, are necessary to insure happiness. In proof of this remark, it is sufficient to consider, how much our tranquillity is liable to be affected,

1. By our temper ;
2. By our imagination ;
3. By our opinions ; and
4. By our habits.

In all these respects the mind may be influenced to a great degree by original constitution or by early education ; and when this influence happens to be unfavourable, it is not to be corrected at once by the precepts of philosophy. Much, however, may be done undoubtedly, in such instances, by our own persevering efforts ; and, therefore, the particulars now enumerated deserve our attention, not only from their connection with the speculative question concerning the essentials of happiness, but on account of the practical conclusions to which the consideration of them may lead.

I.

Influence of the Temper on Happiness.

The word *Temper* is used in different senses. Sometimes we apply to it the epithets *gay*, *lively*,

melancholy, gloomy; on other occasions, the epithets *fretful, passionate, sullen, cool, equable, gentle*. It is in the *last* sense we use it at present, to denote the habitual state of a man's mind in point of *irascibility*; or, in other words, to mark the habitual predominance of the *benevolent* or *malevolent* affections in his intercourse with his fellow-creatures.

The connection between this part of the character of an individual, and the habitual state of his mind in point of happiness, is obvious from what was formerly observed concerning the pleasures and pains attached respectively to the exercise of our benevolent and malevolent affections. As nature has strengthened the social ties among mankind, by annexing a secret charm to every exercise of good-will and of kindness, so she has provided a check on all the discordant passions, by that agitation and disquiet which are their inseparable concomitants. This is true even with respect to resentment, how justly soever it may be provoked by the injurious conduct of others. It is always accompanied with an unpleasant feeling, which warns us, as soon as we have taken the necessary measures for our own security, to banish every sentiment of malice from the heart. On the due regulation of this part of our constitution, our happiness in life materially depends; and there is no part of it whatever where it is in our power, by our persevering efforts, to do more to cure our *constitutional* or our *acquired* infirmities.

Resentment was formerly distinguished into *instinctive* and *deliberate*, the latter of which (it was observed) has always a reference to the motives of the person against whom it is directed, and implies a sense of justice, or of moral good or evil.

In some men the animal or instinctive impulse is stronger than in others. Where this is the case, or where proper care has not been taken in early education to bring it under restraint, a quick or irascible temper is the consequence. This fault is frequently observable in affectionate and generous characters, and impairs their happiness, not so much by the effects it produces on their minds, as by the eventual misfortunes to which it exposes them.* The sentiments of ill-will which such men feel are only momentary, and the habitual state of their mind is benevolent and happy; but as their reason is the sport of every accident, the best dispositions of the heart can at no time give them any security that they shall not, before they sleep, experience some paroxysm of insanity, which shall close all their prospects of happiness for ever. A frequent and serious consideration of the fatal conse-

* “ Irascible men,” (says Aristotle,) “ though moved to passion too suddenly, in immoderate degrees, and on improper occasions, are yet easily pacified; if they be soon angry they are also soon pleased, which is the best circumstance attending them.”—(Ethic. Nic. B. 4. c. 5.) Cicero states this still more strongly in a letter to Atticus. “ Irritabiles animos esse optimorum sæpe hominum, et eosdem placabiles; et esse hanc agilitatem, ut ita dicam, mollitiamque naturæ plerumque bonitatis.”—Epist. ad Atticum, Lib. i. epist. xvii.

quences which may arise from sudden and uncontrolled passion cannot fail to have some tendency to check its excesses. It is an infirmity which is often produced by some fault in early education ; by allowing children to exercise authority over their dependents, and not providing for them, in the opposition of their equals, a sufficient discipline and preparation for the conflicts they may expect to struggle with in future life.

When the animal resentment does not immediately subside, it must be supported by an opinion of bad intention in its object ; and consequently, when this happens to an individual so habitually as to be characteristic of his temper, it indicates a disposition on *his* part to put unfavourable constructions on the actions of others, or (as we commonly express it) *to take things by the wrong handle*. In some instances this may proceed from a settled conviction of the worthlessness of mankind ; but in general it originates in self-dissatisfaction, occasioned by the consciousness of vice or folly, which leads the person who feels it to withdraw his attention from himself, by referring the causes of his ill-humour to the imaginary faults of his neighbours. Such men do not wait till provocation is given them, but *look out* anxiously for occasions of quarrel, creating to themselves, by the help of imagination, an object suited to that particular humour they wish to indulge ; and, when their resentment is once excited, they obstinately refuse to listen to anything that may be offered in the way of extenuation or

apology. In feeble minds this displays itself in peevishness, which vents itself languidly upon any object it meets. In more vigorous and determined minds it produces violent and boisterous passion. For, as Butler has well remarked, both of these seem to be the operation of the same principle, appearing in different forms, according to the constitution of the individual. “In the one case “the humour discharges itself *at once*; in the other “it is continually discharging.”

There is, too, a species of misanthropy which is sometimes grafted on a worthy and benevolent heart. When the standard of moral excellence we have been accustomed to conceive is greatly elevated above the common attainments of humanity, we are apt to become too difficult and fastidious, (if I may use the expression) in our *moral taste*; or, in plainer language, we become unreasonably censorious of the follies and vices of the age in which we live. In such cases it may happen that the native benevolence of the mind, by being habitually directed towards ideal characters, may prove a source of real disaffection and dislike to those with whom we associate. Such a disposition (when carried to an extreme) not only sours the temper, and dries up all the springs of innocent satisfaction which nature has so liberally provided for us in the common incidents of life, but, by withdrawing a man from active pursuits, renders all his talents and virtue useless to society.* The great nurse and che-

* A character of this description has furnished to Moliere

richer of this species of misanthropy is solitary contemplation ; and the only effectual remedy is society and business, together with a habit of directing the attention rather to the improvement of our own characters, than to a jealous and suspicious examination of the motives which influence the conduct of our neighbours.

This last observation leads me to remark farther, that one great cause of this perversion of our nature is a very common and fatal prejudice, which leads men to believe that the degree of their own virtue is proportioned to the justness and the liveliness of their moral feelings ; whereas in truth virtue consists neither in liveliness of feeling, nor in rectitude of judgment, but in an habitual regard to our sense of duty in the conduct of life. To enlighten, indeed, our conscience with respect to the part which we ourselves have to act, and to cultivate that quick and delicate sense of propriety which may restrain us from every offence, how trifling soever it may appear, against the laws of morality, is an essential part of our duty ; and what a strong

the subject of his most finished comedy ; and to Marmontel of one of his most agreeable and useful moral tales. The former of these is universally known as the *chef-d'œuvre* of the French stage ; but the latter possesses also an uncommon degree of merit, by the hints it suggests for curing the weaknesses in which the character originates, and by the interesting contrast it exhibits between the Misanthrope of Moliere and a man who unites inflexibility of principle with that accommodation of temper which is necessary for the practical exercise of virtue.

sense of duty, aided by a sound understanding, will naturally lead to. But to exercise our powers of moral judgment and moral feeling on the character and conduct of our neighbours, is so far from being necessarily connected with our moral improvement, that it has frequently a tendency to withdraw our attention from the real state of our own characters ; and to flatter us with a belief, that the degree in which we possess the different virtues is proportioned to the indignation excited in our minds by the want of them in others. That this rule of judgment is at least *not infallible* may be inferred from the common observation, (justified by the experience of every man who has paid any attention to human life,) that the most scrupulous men in their own conduct are generally the most indulgent to the faults of their fellow-creatures. I will not go quite so far as to assert with Dr Hutcheson, (although I believe his remark has much foundation in truth,) “ that men have commonly the good or the bad “ qualities which they ascribe to mankind.” I shall content myself with repeating after Mr Addison, “ that, among all the monstrous characters in hu- “ man nature, there is none so odious, nor indeed “ so exquisitely ridiculous, as that of a rigid severe “ temper in a worthless man ; ” * an observation which, from the manner in which he states it, evidently shows that he did not consider this union as a very *rare* occurrence among the numberless inconsistencies in our moral judgments and habits.

* Spectator, No. 169.

But what we are chiefly concerned at present to remark, is the tendency of a censorious disposition with respect to our own *happiness*. That favourable opinions of our species, and those benevolent affections towards them which such opinions produce, are sources of exquisite enjoyment to those who entertain them, no person will dispute. But there are two very different ways in which men set about the attainment of this satisfaction. One set of men aim at modelling the world to their own wish, and repine in proportion to the disappointments they experience in their plans of general reformation. Another, while they do what they can to improve their fellow-creatures, consider it as *their* chief business to watch over their own characters; and as they cannot succeed to their wish in making mankind what they ought to be, they study to accommodate their views and feelings to the order of Providence. They exert their ingenuity in apologizing for folly and misconduct, and are always more disposed to praise than to blame: And when they see unquestionable and unpardonable delinquences, they avail themselves of such occurrences, not as occasions for venting indignation and abuse, but as lessons of admonition to themselves, and as calls to attempt the amendment of the delinquent by gentle and friendly remonstrances. Of these two plans it is easy to see that the one, while it appears flattering to the indolence of the individual, (because it requires no efforts of self-denial) must necessarily engage him in imprac-

ticable and hopeless efforts. The other, although it requires force of mind to put it in execution, is within the reach of every man to accomplish in a degree highly important to his own character, and to his own comfort. This indeed I apprehend is the *great secret* of happiness,—to study to accommodate our own minds to things external, rather than to accommodate things external to ourselves ; and there are no instances in which the practice of the rule is of more consequence than in our intercourse with our fellow-creatures. Let us do what we can to amend them, but let us trust for our *happiness* to what depends on ourselves. Nor is there any delusion necessary for this purpose ; for the fairest views of human character are in truth the justest ; and the more intimately we know mankind, the less we shall be misled by the partialities of pride and self-love ; and the more shall we be disposed to acknowledge the merits, and to pardon the frailties of others.

“ The regulating our apprehensions of the actions of others” (says Dr Hutcheson) “ is of very great importance, that we may not imagine mankind worse than they really are, and thereby bring on ourselves a temper full of suspicion, hatred, anger, and contempt towards others, which is a constant state of misery, much worse than all the evils to be feared from credulity. If we examine the true springs of human actions, we shall seldom find their motives worse than self-love. Men are often subject to anger, and on sudden provo-

“ cations do injuries to each other, and *that* only
“ from self-love, without malice ; but the greatest
“ part of their lives is employed in offices of natu-
“ ral affection and friendship, innocent self-love, or
“ love of a country. The little party prejudices
“ are generally founded upon ignorance or false
“ opinions, rather apt to move pity than hatred.
“ Such considerations are the best preservative
“ against anger, malice, and discontent of mind
“ with the order of nature.”*

These observations suggest the most important of all expedients for correcting those infirmities in which a bad temper originates ;—to cultivate that candour with respect to the motives of others, which results from habits of attention to our own infirmities, and from habits of reflection in our cooler moments on the numerous circumstances which, independently of any criminal intention, may produce the *appearance* of vice in human conduct. †

* Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, Sect. iv. 4.

† Another expedient of very powerful effect is to suppress, as far as possible, the external signs of peevishness or of violence. So intimate is the connection between mind and body, that the mere imitation of any strong expression has a tendency to excite the corresponding passion ; and, on the other hand, the suppression of the external sign has a tendency to compose the passion which it indicates. It is said of Socrates, that, whenever he felt the passion of resentment rising in his mind, he became instantly silent ; and I have no doubt, that, by observing this rule, he not only avoided many an occasion of giving offence to others, but added much to the comfort of his own life,

Abstracting, however, from these considerations, founded on candid and indulgent views towards

by killing the seeds of those malignant affections which are the great bane of human happiness.

Something of the same kind, though proceeding from a less worthy motive, we may see daily exemplified in the case of those men who are peevish and unhappy in their own families, while in the company of strangers they are good humoured and cheerful. At home they give vent to all their passions without restraint, and exasperate their original irritability by the reaction of that bodily agitation which it occasions. In promiscuous society the restraints of ceremony render this impossible. They find themselves obliged to conceal studiously whatever emotions of dissatisfaction they may feel, and soon come to experience, in fact, that gentle and accommodating temper of which they have been striving to counterfeit the appearance.—See *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. III. pp. 217, 218.

On these principles is founded a practice which, if I am not misinformed, is followed by that respectable body of men called Quakers, in the education of their children;—to accustom them from their earliest infancy to an equable and monotonous softness of voice; and to check every deviation from it, even in those cases where the tranquillity of their minds must unavoidably be disturbed by accidental occurrences. No expedient more effectual could be thought of for cherishing that evenness and serenity of soul, which, while it renders us inoffensive to others, prepares us to receive without alloy whatever innocent gratifications are placed within our reach.—In practising this rule, however, is there not some danger of producing a sullenness of temper? The following observations of Aristotle (though they are in some respects questionable) deserve at least to be well considered. “The resentful and implacable temper retains anger long, because it does not give free vent to it; for to vent anger in vengeance naturally appeases it by substituting pleasure in the stead of pain, but passion restrained

our fellow-creatures, it is of essential importance for our happiness, as well as a duty necessarily resulting from our conviction of the sacredness of moral obligation, to cherish in our minds a devoted attachment to truth and to virtue, on account of their own *intrinsic excellence*; and to cherish it with a peculiar care, if our lot should be cast in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. No error can be more fatal (as Dr Ferguson has excellently remarked,) than “to rest our own choice of good qualities on the supposition, that we are to meet with such qualities in other men, or to apprehend that want of merit in our fellow-creatures will dispense with that justice or liberality of conduct which we ought to maintain.” *

Reflections of this sort are, in a peculiar degree, consolatory and useful in such times as we have lately witnessed, when the occasional successes of violence and injustice were apt to shake the confidence of the firmest and most upright characters, and, by suggesting melancholy apprehensions concerning the fortunes of the human race, to damp the benevolent exertions of its warmest and most enlightened friends. “The contemporaries of a great political revolution” (says a profound and eloquent writer) “lose fre-
 “gathers strength by compression, and, as it remains hid with-
 “in the breast, the gentle power of persuasion cannot be ap-
 “plied for its alleviation; it must be digested by the internal
 “vigour of the constitution, which is a work of time.”—(Arist. Ethic. Nic. B. iv. c. 5.)

* Inst. p. 169. Third Edition.

“quently all interest in the search of truth, and in
 “the dissemination of right principles. So many
 “events decided by force ; so many crimes absolved
 “by success ; so many misfortunes insulted by power ;
 “so many generous sentiments rendered objects
 “of ridicule ;—all conspire to wear out the hopes
 “even of those men who are the most faithful to
 “the cause of justice and humanity. Nevertheless,
 “they ought to take courage from the reflection,
 “that, in the history of the human mind, there has
 “never existed one useful thought, nor one im-
 “portant truth, which has not found its age and
 “its admirers.” *

The influence of the temper on happiness is much increased by another circumstance ; that the same causes which alienate our affections from our fellow-creatures are apt to suggest unfavourable views of the course of human affairs, and lead the mind by an easy transition to gloomy conceptions of the general order of the universe. In this state of mind, when, in the language of *Hamlet*, “*Man delights us not*,”—the sentiment of misanthropy seldom fails to be accompanied with that dark and hopeless philosophy which Shakespeare has, with such exquisite knowledge of the human heart, described as springing up with it from the same root. “This goodly
 “frame, the earth, appears a sterile promontory ;—
 “this majestical roof, fretted with golden fires, a
 “foul and pestilent congregation of vapours ;—and

* De la Littérature Considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions Sociales ; par Mad. de Staël Holstein.—Introduction, p. 4.

“ Man himself—noble in reason, infinite in faculties—this beauty of the world—this paragon of animals, seems but the *quintessence of dust*.” Such a temper and such views are not only to the possessor the completion of wretchedness, but, by the proofs they exhibit of insensibility and ingratitude towards the Great Source of happiness and perfection, they argue some defect in those *moral feelings* to which many men lay claim, who affect an indifference to all serious impressions and sentiments. They argue at least what Milton has finely called a *sullenness against nature*,—a disposition of mind which no man could possibly feel whose temper was rightly constituted towards his fellow-creatures. How congenial to the best emotions of the heart is the following sentiment in his *Tractate on Education* ! “ In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is soft and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicings with Heaven and earth.”

The true foundation of *the vernal delight* which is here so beautifully described,—of this *sympathy*, if I may be allowed the expression, with rejoicing Nature, is a benevolent heart to mankind; a disposition to rejoice with our Maker in the general happiness of his whole creation. To this disposition, when displayed in the lesser offices of ordinary life, we commonly give the name of *good humour*; an expression which, though we sometimes connect with it the idea of levity, yet, when it denotes an habitual state of

mind, originating in candour, indulgence, and benevolence, is descriptive of that precise frame which best prepares us to speculate with success on the gravest and most important of all subjects. "Good humour," (says Lord Shaftesbury,) "is not only the best security against enthusiasm, but the best foundation of piety and true religion : for if right thoughts and worthy apprehensions of the Supreme Being are fundamental to all true worship and adoration, 'tis more than probable that we shall never miscarry in this respect, except through ill-humour only. Nothing beside ill-humour, can bring a man to think seriously, that the world is governed by any devilish or malicious power. I very much question whether any thing, besides ill-humour, can be the cause of atheism. For there are so many arguments to persuade a man in good-humour, that, in the main, all things are kindly and well-disposed, that one would think it impossible for him to be so far out of conceit with affairs, as to imagine they all ran at adventures ; and that the world, as wise and venerable a face as it carried, had neither sense nor meaning in it. This, however, I am persuaded of, that nothing beside ill humour can give us dreadful or ill thoughts of a Supreme Manager. Nothing can persuade us of sullenness or sourness in such a Being, beside the actual forefeeling of somewhat of this kind within ourselves."

As the temper has an influence on our specula-

tive opinions, so the views we form of the administration of the Universe, and, in particular, of the condition and prospects of Man, have a reciprocal effect on the temper. The belief of overruling wisdom and goodness communicates the most heartfelt of all satisfactions ; and the idea of prevailing order and happiness has an habitual effect in composing the discordant affections, similar to what we experience when, in some retired and tranquil scene, we enjoy the sweet serenity of a summer evening.

This tendency of the mind, on the one hand, to *harmonize* its affections, and, on the other, to suffer the passions to run into *anarchy*, according as it thinks well or ill of the order of the universe ; or, (which comes to the same thing,) this influence of an enlightened religion on the temper, is alluded to more than once in that beautiful poem the *Pleasures of Imagination*. In the following passage of one of his odes, Akenside has employed, in confirmation of this doctrine, the same illustration to which I have just alluded ; I mean the effect which particular aspects of the *material* universe have on the *moral* and social feelings.

Thron'd in the sun's descending car,
What power unseen diffuseth far
 This tenderness of mind !
What Genius smiles on yonder flood ;
What God in whispers from the wood,
 Bids every thought be kind !

O Thou, whate'er thine awful name,
Whose goodness our untoward frame
 With social love constrains ;
Thou, who by fair affection's ties
Give'st us to double all our joys
 And half disarm our pains ;

Let universal candour still,
Clear as yon heaven-reflecting rill,
 Preserve my open mind ;
Nor this, nor that man's crooked ways
One sordid doubt within me raise
 To injure human kind.

II.

Influence of the Imagination on Happiness.

One of the principal effects of a liberal education is to accustom us to withdraw our attention from the objects of our present perceptions, and to dwell at pleasure on the past, the absent, and the future. How much it must enlarge in this way the sphere of our enjoyment or suffering is obvious ; for (not to mention the recollection of the past,) all that part of our happiness or misery, which arises from our *hopes* or our *fears*, derives its existence entirely from the power of imagination.

It is not, however, from education alone that the differences among individuals in respect of this faculty seem to arise. Even among those who have enjoyed the same advantages of mental culture, we

find some men in whom it never makes any considerable appearance,—men whose thoughts seem to be completely engrossed with the objects and events with which their senses are conversant, and on whose minds the impressions produced by what is absent and future are so comparatively languid, that they seldom or never excite their passions or arrest their attention. In others, again, the colouring which imagination throws on the objects they conceive is so brilliant, that even the present impressions of sense are unable to stand the comparison; and the thoughts are perpetually wandering from this world of realities to fairy scenes of their own creation. In such men, the imagination is the principal source of their pleasurable or painful sensations, and their happiness or misery is in a great measure determined by the gay or melancholy cast, which this faculty has derived from original constitution, or from acquired habits.

When the *hopes* or the *fears* which imagination inspires prevail over the present importunity of our sensual appetites, it is a proof of the superiority which the intellectual part of our character has acquired over the animal; and as the course of life which wisdom and virtue prescribe requires frequently a sacrifice of the *present* to the *future*, a warm and vigorous imagination is sometimes of essential use, by exhibiting those lively prospects of solid and permanent happiness which may counteract the allurements of present pleasure. In those who are enslaved completely by their sensual appetites,

imagination may indeed operate in anticipating future gratification, or it may blend itself with memory in the recollection of past enjoyment ; but where this is the case, imagination is so far from answering its intended purpose, that it establishes an unnatural alliance between our intellectual powers and our animal desires ; and extends the empire of the latter, by filling up the intervals of actual indulgence with habits of thought, more degrading and ruinous, if possible, to the rational part of our being, than the time which is employed in criminal gratification.

In such individuals, imagination is but a prolongation of sensual indulgences, and scarcely merits the appellation of an intellectual power. It brutifies the man, indeed, still more than he could possibly become, if it did not form a part of his constitution, and if he were merely a compound of reason and passion. To such men, it surely cannot be considered as a constituent of what deserves the name of happiness. On the contrary, by increasing the importunate cravings of desire beyond those limits which nature prescribes, it abridges that sphere of innocent gratification which the Beneficent Author of our Being intends us to enjoy.

In mentioning, however, the influence of imagination on happiness, what I had chiefly in view was the addition which is made to our enjoyments or sufferings, on the whole, by the predominance of *hope* or of *fear* in the habitual state of our minds. One man is continually led, by the complexion of

his temper, to forebode evil to himself and to the world ; while another, after a thousand disappointments, looks forward to the future with exultation, and feels his confidence in Providence unshaken. One principal cause of such differences is undoubtedly the natural constitution of the mind in point of fortitude. The weak and the timid are under continual alarm from the apprehension of evils which are barely possible, and fancy “ there is a lion in the way ” when they are called on to discharge the common duties of life ; although, in truth, (as one of our poets has remarked,) the evils they apprehend, supposing them actually to happen, cannot exceed those they habitually suffer.

Is there an evil worse than fear itself ?
And what avails it that indulgent Heaven
From mortal eyes has wrapt the woes to come,
If we, ingenious to torment ourselves,
Grow pale at hideous fictions of our own ?
Enjoy the present ; nor with heedless cares
Of what *may* spring from blind misfortune's womb,
Appal the surest hour that life bestows :
Serene and master of yourself prepare
For what may come, and leave the rest to Heaven.*

It may be worth while here to remark, that what we properly call *cowardice* is entirely a disease of the imagination. It does not always imply an impatience under present suffering. On the contrary, it is frequently observed in men who submit quietly to the evils which they have actually experien-

* Armstrong's Art of Preserving Health, Book iv.

ced, and of which they have thus learned to measure the extent with accuracy. Nay, there are cases in which *patience* is the offspring of *cowardice*, the imagination magnifying future dangers to such a degree as to render present sufferings comparatively insignificant.* Men of this description always judge it safer to “bear the ills they know, than fly to others that they know not of;” and of consequence, when under the pressure of pain and disease, scruple to employ those vigorous remedies, which, while they give them a chance for recovery, threaten them with the possibility of a more imminent danger. The brave, on the contrary, are not always patient under distress; and they sometimes, perhaps, owe their bravery in part to this impatience. We may remark an apt illustration of this observation in the two sexes. The male is more courageous, but more impatient of suffering; the female more timid, but more resigned and serene under severe pain and affliction.

Abstracting from constitutional biasses, the two great sources of a desponding imagination are *superstition* and *scepticism*. Of the former, the unhappy victims are many, and have been so in all ages of the world, although their number may be expected gradually to diminish in proportion to the progress and the diffusion of knowledge. All of us, however, have had an opportunity of witnessing enough of its effects in those remains which are still to be found, in many parts of this country, of the

* *Dolendi modus, timendi non item.*

old prejudices with respect to apparitions and spectres, to be able to form an idea of what mankind must have suffered in the ages of Gothic ignorance, when these weaknesses of the uninformed mind were skilfully made use of by an ambitious priesthood as an engine of ecclesiastical policy. . *Scepticism*, too, when carried to an extreme, can scarcely fail to produce similar effects. As it encourages the notion, that all events are regulated by chance, if it does not alarm the mind with terror, it extinguishes at least every ray of hope ; and such is the restless activity of the mind, that it may be questioned whether the agitation of fear be a source of more complete wretchedness than that listlessness which deprives us of all interest about futurity, and represents to us the present moment alone as ours. Nor is this all. A complete scepticism is so unnatural a state to the human understanding, that it was probably never realized in any one instance. Nay, I believe it will generally be found, that, in proportion to the violence of a man's disbelief on those important subjects which are essential to human happiness, the more extravagant is his credulity on other articles, where the fashion of the times does not brand credulity as a weakness ; for the mind must have something distinct from the objects of sense on which to repose itself ; and those principles of our nature, on which religion is founded, if they are prevented from developing themselves under the direction of an enlightened reason, will infalli-

bly disclose themselves, in one way or another, in the character and the conduct.

Of this no stronger proof can be produced, than that the same period of the eighteenth century, and the same part of Europe, which was most distinguished by the triumphs of a sceptical philosophy, was also distinguished by a credulity so extraordinary, or rather so miraculous, as to encourage a greater number of visionaries and impostors than had appeared since the time of the revival of letters. The pretenders to animal magnetism, and the revivers of the Rosicrucian mysteries, are but two instances out of many that might be mentioned.

I have only to add farther on this subject, that it is an enlightened philosophy alone which can guard the mind effectually against those superstitious weaknesses which are often to be found in men remarkable, not only for their intrepidity amid the real difficulties and dangers of life, but for their fearless and heroic gallantry in the field of battle. Not to speak of Scipio's faith in dreams, and Cæsar's apprehension about the Ides of March, some of the greatest military characters in modern Europe have, even in our own times, allowed themselves to be imposed on by the artifices of astrologers, nay, of common fortune-tellers. Frederic the Great (if we may credit the Marquis de Bouillé) was not without faith in the predictions of conjurers; and the late Gustavus of Sweden (we are positively assured by the same writer) was by no means free from this

sort of superstition. He had always dreaded the month of March; and the first word he said to Armfeldt, on finding himself wounded, was to remind him of this circumstance.* The ascendant gained by Rosicrucian Illuminati over the mind of the late Frederic William of Prussia (a prince of unquestionable intrepidity in all military operations) is matter of general notoriety.

Such, then, are the miseries of an ill-regulated imagination, whether arising from constitutional biasses, or from the acquisition of erroneous opinions; and they are miseries which, when they affect habitually the state of the mind, are sufficient to poison all the enjoyments which fortune can offer. To those, on the contrary, whose education has been fortunately conducted, this faculty opens inexhaustible sources of delight, presenting continually to their thoughts the fairest views of mankind and of Providence, and, under the deepest gloom of adverse fortune, gilding the prospects of futurity.

I have remarked, in the first volume of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, that what we call *sensibility* depends in a great measure on the degree of imagination we possess; and hence, in such a world as ours, chequered as it is with good and evil, there must be in every mind a mixture of pleasure and of pain, proportioned to the interest which imagination leads it to take in the fortunes of mankind. It is even

* *Memoirs of the Marquis de Bouillé.*

natural and reasonable for a benevolent disposition (notwithstanding what Mr Smith has so ingeniously alleged to the contrary *) to dwell more habitually on the gloomy than on the gay aspect of human affairs; for the fortunate stand in no need of our assistance; while, amidst the distractions of our own personal concerns, the wretched require all the assistance which our imagination can lend them, to engage our attention to their distresses. In this sympathy, however, with the general sufferings of humanity, the pleasure far overbalances the pain; not only on account of that secret charm which accompanies all the modifications of benevolence, but because it is they alone whose prospects of futurity are sanguine, and whose confidence in the final triumph of reason and of justice is linked with all the best principles of the heart, who are likely to make a common cause with the oppressed and the miserable. This, therefore, (although we frequently apply to it the epithet *melancholy*,) is, on the whole, a happy state of mind, and has no connection with what we commonly call *low spirits*,—a disease where the pain is unmixed, and which is always accompanied, either as a cause or effect, by the most intolerable of all feelings, a sentiment of self-dissatisfaction; whereas the temper I have now alluded to is felt only by those who are at peace with themselves, and with the whole world. Such is that spe-

* Theory of Moral Sentiments. Sixth Edition, Part iii. chap. iii.

cies of *melancholy* which Thomson has so pathetically described as exerting a peculiar influence at that season of the year (his own favourite and inspiring season) when the “dark winds of autumn” return,” and when the falling leaves and the naked fields fill the heart at once with mournful presages, and with tender recollections.

He comes ! he comes ! in every breeze the *Power*
Of *philosophic melancholy* comes !

His near approach, the sudden starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The softened feature, and the beating heart,
Pierc'd deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.
O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes ;
Inflames imagination ; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness ; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye.
As fast the correspondent passions rise,
As varied and as high : Devotion rais'd
To rapture and Divine astonishment ;
The love of nature unconfined, and chief
Of human race ; the large ambitious wish
To make them blest ; the sigh for suffering worth
Lost in obscurity ; the noble scorn
Of tyrant pride ; the fearless great resolve ;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws
Inspiring glory through remotest time ;
The awakened throb for virtue and for fame ;
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear ;
With all the social offspring of the heart.

It will not, I think, be denied, that an imagina-

tion of the cast here described, while it has an obvious tendency to refine the taste and to exalt the character, enlarges very widely in the man who possesses it the sphere of his enjoyment. It is, however, no less indisputable, that this faculty requires an uncommon share of good sense to keep it under proper regulation, and to derive from it the pleasures it was intended to afford, without suffering it either to mislead the judgment in the conduct of life, or to impair our relish for the moderate gratifications which are provided for our present condition. I have treated at some length of this subject in the first volume of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, under the title of the “*inconveniences resulting from an ill-regulated imagination* ;” and shall content myself here with a simple reference to that chapter, without attempting any recapitulation of its contents.

These inconveniences have appeared to some philosophers to be so alarming, that they have concluded it to be one of the most essential objects of education to repress as much as possible this dangerous faculty. But in this, as in other instances, it is in vain to counteract the purposes of nature ; and all that human wisdom ought to attempt, is to study the ends which she has apparently in view, and to co-operate with the means which she has provided for their attainment. The very arguments on which these philosophers have proceeded justifies the remark I have now made, and encourages us to follow out the plan I have recom-

mended ; for surely the more cruel the effects of a deranged imagination, the happier are the consequences to be expected from this part of our constitution if properly regulated, and if directed to its destined purposes by good sense and philosophy. It is justly remarked by an author in the *Tatler*, as an acknowledged fact, that “ of all writings licentious poems do soonest corrupt the heart. And “ why” (continues he) “ should we not be as universally persuaded that the grave and serious performances of such as write in the most engaging manner, by a kind of Divine impulse, must be the most effectual persuasive to goodness ? The most active principle in our mind is the imagination. To it a good poet makes his court perpetually, and by this faculty takes care to gain it first. Our passions and inclinations come over next, and our reason surrenders itself with pleasure in the end. Thus the whole soul is insensibly betrayed into morality, by bribing the fancy with beautiful and agreeable images of those very things that, in the books of the philosophers, appear austere, and have at the best but a kind of forbidding aspect. In a word, the poets do, as it were, strew the rough paths of virtue so full of flowers, that we are not sensible of the uneasiness of them, and imagine ourselves in the midst of pleasures, and the most bewitching allurements, at the time we are making a progress in the severest duties of life.” *

Hitherto we have been considering the connection between imagination and happiness in those individuals over whose minds the influence of this faculty is increased by a liberal education beyond the ordinary standard. There is, however, no mind over which it has not some influence more or less ; for there is no mind whose estimates of external objects are not affected in some degree by casual *associations*, and of course none in which the conceptions of external objects are not in some degree modified by the power of imagination.

I have elsewhere remarked that the greater part of what Mr Alison has so finely observed concerning the pleasures of *Taste*, may be applied to the various objects of our pursuit in life. Hardly anything is appreciated according to its intrinsic value. Long before the dawn of reason and reflection, associations are formed in the minds of children, of happiness, of elegance, of gaiety, of spirit, of fashion, of sensibility, as connected with particular pursuits or amusements, sometimes with particular animal gratifications. And it is a melancholy truth to add, that by such casual associations the choice of most individuals is determined, and the destiny of their lives decided.

Such associations, however, are not always a source of suffering. On the contrary, they often add much to the happiness of human life. With what satisfaction does the soldier submit to the hardships of his profession, who superadds to a sense of duty the enthusiasm which arises from the

classical recollections of Greece and Rome, in comparison of *him* whose mind never wanders from the scenes and occupations which press upon his senses ! Even the most trifling occurrences of the most common situation ;—the insignificant objects which are scattered over the waste of human life, are embellished to those whose minds are stored with fortunate associations, with charms which are as inconceivable to the bulk of mankind as the raptures with which the poet surveys the face of Nature are to the tradesman and the peasant. This does not render the pleasures of life less *real*. On the contrary, it adds infinitely to their amount, and furnishes one of the strongest evidences of benevolent design in the Author of our Constitution.

The great object of education ought to be, not to counteract this tendency to association, but to give it a proper direction,—not to limit our enjoyment in every particular to the mere physical gratification, but to connect pleasing associations as far as possible with objects and events which it is in the power of all men to command—with the faithful and conscientious discharge of our duties, with the pursuits of science, and with those beauties of nature which are open to all.

“ Associations of this kind,” (as Mr Alison well remarks,) “ when acquired in early life, are seldom
“ altogether lost ; and whatever inconveniences
“ they may sometimes have with respect to the general character, or however much they may be
“ ridiculed by those who do not experience them,

“ they are yet productive to those who possess
 “ them of a perpetual and innocent delight. Na-
 “ ture herself is their friend. In her most dreadful
 “ as well as her most lovely scenes, they can dis-
 “ cover something either to elevate their imagina-
 “ tions, or to move their hearts, and amid every
 “ change of scenery or of climate, can still find
 “ themselves among the early objects of their ad-
 “ miration or their love.”

On the proper regulation of this part of our con-
 stitution, many valuable remarks are to be found
 in the writings of the ancient Stoics; among whom,
 the *χρησις ὁια δει φαντασιων* was regarded as one of
 the most important of our concerns in the conduct
 of life.

Even in those men, however, whose education
 has not been so systematically conducted, and whose
 associations have been formed by accident, not-
 withstanding the many acute sufferings to which
 they may be exposed, I am persuaded, that (except
 in some very rare combinations of circumstances,) this
 part of our constitution is a more copious source
 of pleasure than of pain. After all the complaints
 that have been made of the peculiar distresses inci-
 dent to cultivated minds, who would exchange the
 sensibility of his intellectual and moral being for
 the apathy of those whose only avenues of pleasure
 and pain are to be found in their animal nature,
 who “ move thoughtlessly in the narrow circle of
 “ their existence, and to whom the falling leaves
 “ present no idea but that of approaching winter ?”

The happiness of such men, it is true, must depend in a great measure on accident; but (such is the wise and gracious arrangement of things,) that I am persuaded they are happier, on the whole, than those in whom the lessons of a cold and sceptical philosophy extinguish the glow of hope and fancy, and “freeze the genial current of the soul.” I would only except those unfortunate cases where the mind is disordered by a constitutional melancholy, or has been early tinctured with the gloom of a depressing superstition.

I shall conclude these very imperfect hints on a most important subject, with remarking the inefficiency of mere reasoning or argument, in correcting the effects of early impressions and prejudices. More is to be expected from the opposite associations, which may be gradually formed by a new course of studies and of occupations, or by a complete change of scenes, of habits, and of society.

III.

Influence of Opinions on Happiness.

By opinions are here meant, not merely speculative conclusions to which we have given our assent, but convictions which have taken root in the mind, and have an habitual influence on the conduct.

Of these opinions a very great and important

part are, in the case of all mankind, interwoven by education with their first habits of thinking, or are insensibly imbibed from the manners of the times.

Where such opinions are erroneous, they may often be corrected to a great degree by the persevering efforts of a reflecting and vigorous mind ; but as the number of minds capable of reflection is comparatively small, it becomes a duty on all who have themselves experienced the happy effects of juster and more elevated principles, to impart, as far as they are able, the same blessing to others. The subject is of too great extent to be here prosecuted ; but the reader will find it discussed at great length in a very valuable section of Dr Ferguson's *Principles of Moral and Political Science*. *

Of the doctrines contained in this section, the following abstract is given by the same writer in his *Institutes of Moral Philosophy*.

“ It is unhappy to lay the pretensions of human nature so low as to check its exertions. The despair of virtue is still more unhappy than the despair of knowledge.

“ It is unhappy to entertain notions of what men actually are, so high as, upon trial and disappointment, to run into the opposite extreme of distrust.

“ It is unhappy to rest our own choice of good qualities on the supposition, that we are to meet with such qualities in other men ; or to appre-

* Part ii. chap. i. sect. 8.

“hend, that want of merit in other men will dis-
 “pense with that justice or liberality of conduct
 “which we ought to maintain.

“It is unhappy to consider perfection as the
 “standard by which we are to censure others, not
 “as the rule by which we are to conduct our-
 “selves.

“It is a wretched opinion, that happiness con-
 “sists in a freedom from trouble, or in having no-
 “thing to do.

“In consequence of this opinion men complain
 “of what might employ them agreeably. By de-
 “clining every duty, and every active engagement,
 “they render life a burden, and they complain that
 “it is so. By declining business to go in search of
 “amusement, they reject what is fitted to occupy
 “them, and search in vain for something else to
 “quicken the languor of a vacant mind.

“It is therefore unhappy to entertain an opi-
 “nion, that any thing can amuse us better than the
 “duties of our station, or than that which we are
 “in the present moment called upon to do.

“It is an unhappy opinion, that beneficence is an
 “effort of self-denial, or that we lay our fellow-
 “creatures under great obligations by the kindness
 “we do them.

“It is an unhappy opinion, that anything what-
 “ever is preferable to happiness.*

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* In illustration of this last remark, Dr Ferguson quotes in a note the following passage from the Tatler. “There is

“ It is happy” (continues the same author) “ to value personal qualities above every other consideration, and to state perfection as a guide to ourselves, not as a rule by which to censure others.

“ It is happy to rely on what is in our own power; to value the characters of a worthy, benevolent, and strenuous mind, not as a form merely to be observed in our conduct, but as the completion of what we have to wish for in human life, and to consider the debasements of a malicious and cowardly nature as the extreme misery to which we are exposed.

“ It is happy to have continually in view that we are members of society, and of the community of mankind ; that we are instruments in the hand of God for the good of his creatures ; that, if we are ill members of society, or unwilling instruments in the hand of God, we do our utmost to counteract our nature, to quit our station, and to undo ourselves.

“ hardly a man to be found who would not rather be in pain to appear happy, than be really happy to appear miserable.”

The author of the *Fable of the Bees* (see remark *M*) has also said “ there is nothing so ravishing to the proud” (he should have said to the *vain*) “ as to be thought happy.”

Does not this general anxiety to assume the appearance of happiness proceed from the universal conviction of the connection between happiness and virtue? By counterfeiting the outward signs of happiness a vain man, without any offensive violation of modesty, lays claim indirectly to all those moral qualities of which happiness is commonly understood to be the fruit and the reward.

“ *I am in the station which God has assigned me*, says Epictetus. With this reflection a man may be happy in every station ; without it he cannot be happy in any. Is not the appointment of God sufficient to outweigh every other consideration ? This rendered the condition of a slave agreeable to Epictetus, and that of a monarch to Antoninus. This consideration renders any situation agreeable to a rational nature, which delights not in partial interests, but in universal good.” *

This excellent passage contains a summary of the most valuable principles of the stoical school. One of their doctrines, however, I could have wished that Dr Ferguson had touched upon with his masterly hand ; I mean that which relates to the *inconsistencies* which most men fall into in their expectations of happiness, as well as in the estimates they form of the prosperity of others. The following quotation from Epictetus will explain sufficiently the doctrine to which I allude.

“ What is more reasonable than that they who take pains for anything should get most in that particular for which they take pains ? They have taken pains for power, you for right principles ; they for riches, you for a proper use of the appearances of things. See whether they have the advantage of you in that for which you have taken pains, and which they neglect. If they are in power and you not, why will you not speak

* P. 168, *et seq.*

“ the truth to yourself, that you do nothing for the
“ sake of power, but that they do everything? No,
“ but since I take care to have right principles, it
“ is more reasonable that I should have power?
“ Yes, in respect to what you take care about, your
“ principles. But give up to others the things in
“ which they have taken more care than you. Else
“ it is just as if, because you have right principles,
“ you should think it fit that when you shoot an
“ arrow you should hit the mark better than an
“ archer, or that you should forge better than a
“ smith.” *

Upon the foregoing passage a very ingenious and elegant writer, Mrs Barbauld, has written a commentary so full of good sense and of important practical morality, that I am sure I run no hazard of trespassing on the patience of the reader by the length of the following extracts.

“ As most of the unhappiness in the world arises
“ rather from disappointed desires, than from posi-
“ tive evil, it is of the utmost consequence to attain
“ just notions of the laws and order of the universe,
“ that we may not vex ourselves with fruitless
“ wishes, or give way to groundless and unreason-
“ able discontent. * * * We should consider this
“ world as a great mart of commerce, where for-
“ tune exposes to our view various commodities,
“ riches, ease, tranquillity, fame, integrity, know-
“ ledge. Every thing is marked at a settled price.
“ Our time, our labour, our ingenuity, is so much

* Mrs Carter's Translation of Epictetus.

“ ready money, which we are to lay out to the best
“ advantage. Examine, compare, choose, reject ;
“ but stand to your own judgment, and do not, like
“ children, when you have purchased one thing, re-
“ pine that you do not possess another which you
“ did not purchase. Such is the force of well-regu-
“ lated industry, that a steady and vigorous exer-
“ tion of our faculties, directed to one end, will
“ generally insure success. Would you, for in-
“ stance, be rich ? Do you think that single point
“ worth the sacrificing every thing else to ? You
“ may then be rich. Thousands have become so
“ from the lowest beginnings, from toil and patient
“ diligence, and attention to the minutest articles
“ of expence and profit. But you must give up the
“ pleasures of leisure, of a vacant mind, of a free
“ unsuspicious temper. If you preserve your inte-
“ grity, it must be a coarse-spun and vulgar hones-
“ ty. Those high and lofty notions of morals which
“ you brought with you from the schools must be
“ considerably lowered, and mixed with the baser
“ alloy of a jealous and worldly-minded prudence.
“ You must learn to do hard, if not unjust things ;
“ and for the nice embarrassments of a delicate and
“ ingenuous spirit, it is necessary for you to get rid
“ of them as fast as possible. You must shut your
“ heart against the muses, and be content to feed
“ your understanding with plain household truths.
“ In short, you must not attempt to enlarge your
“ ideas, or polish your taste, or refine your senti-
“ ments, but must keep on in one beaten track,

“ without turning aside either to the right hand or
“ to the left. ‘ But I cannot submit to drudgery
“ like this. I feel a spirit above it.’ ’Tis well : be
“ above it then ; only do not repine that you are
“ not rich.

“ Is knowledge the pearl of price ? That too
“ may be purchased—by steady application, and
“ long solitary hours of study and reflection. Be-
“ stow these and you shall be wise. ‘ But’ (says
“ the man of letters) ‘ what a hardship is it that
“ many who are grossly illiterate shall raise a
“ fortune and make a figure, while I have little
“ more than the common conveniences of life.’
“ *Et tibi magna satis !* Was it in order to raise
“ a fortune that you consumed the sprightly hours
“ of youth in study and retirement ? Was it to be
“ rich that you grew pale over the midnight lamp,
“ and distilled the sweetness from the Greek and
“ Roman spring ? You have then mistaken your
“ path, and ill employed your industry. ‘ What re-
“ ward have I then for all my labours ?’ What re-
“ ward ! A large comprehensive soul, well purged
“ from vulgar fears, and perturbations, and preju-
“ dices ; able to comprehend and interpret the works
“ of man and of God. A rich, flourishing, culti-
“ vated mind, pregnant with inexhaustible stores
“ of entertainment and reflection. A perpetual
“ spring of fresh ideas ; and the conscious dignity
“ of superior intelligence. Good heaven ! and what
“ reward can you ask besides ?

“ But is it not some reproach upon the economy

“ of Providence that such a one, who is a mean
 “ dirty fellow, should have amassed wealth enough
 “ to buy half a nation ?’ Not in the least. He
 “ made himself a mean dirty fellow for that very
 “ end. He has paid his health, his conscience, his
 “ liberty for it, and will you envy him his bargain ?
 “ Will you hang your head and blush in his pre-
 “ sence because he outshines you in equipage and
 “ show ? Lift up your brow with a noble confidence,
 “ and say to yourself, I have not these things, it is
 “ true ; but it is because I have not sought,—be-
 “ cause I have not desired them,—it is because I
 “ possess something better. I have chosen my lot,
 “ —I am content and satisfied.

* * * *

“ I much admire the spirit of the ancient philo-
 “ sophers, in that they never attempted, as our mo-
 “ ralists often do, to lower the tone of philosophy,
 “ and make it consistent with all the indulgencies
 “ of indolence and sensuality. They never thought
 “ of having the bulk of mankind for their disciples ;
 “ but kept themselves as distinct as possible from
 “ a worldly life. They plainly told men what sa-
 “ crifices were required, and what advantages they
 “ were which might be expected.

Si virtus hoc una potest dare, fortis omissis
 Hoc age deliciis. —————

“ If you would be a philosopher these are the
 “ terms. You must do thus and thus : There is no
 “ other way. If not, go and be one of the vulgar.”

IV.

Influence of Habits on Happiness.

The effect of habit in reconciling our minds to the inconveniences of our situation was formerly remarked, and an argument was drawn from it in proof of the goodness of our Creator ; who, besides making so rich a provision of objects suited to the principles of our nature, has thus bestowed on us a power of accommodation to external circumstances, which these principles teach us to avoid.

This tendency of the mind, however, to adapt itself to the objects with which it is familiarly conversant, may, in some instances, not only be a source of occasional suffering, but may disqualify us for relishing the best enjoyments which human life affords. The habits contracted during infancy and childhood are so much more inveterate than those of our maturer years, that they have been justly said to constitute a second nature ; and if, unfortunately, they have been formed amidst circumstances over which we have no control, they leave us no security for our happiness but the caprice of fortune.

To habituate the minds of children to those occupations and enjoyments alone, which it is in the power of an individual at all times to command, is the most solid foundation that can be laid for their future tranquillity. These, too, are the occupations

and enjoyments which afford the most genuine and substantial satisfaction ; and if education were judiciously employed to second in this respect the recommendations of nature, they might appropriate to themselves all the borrowed charms which the vanities of the world derive from casual associations.

With respect to pursuits which depend, in the first instance, on our own choice, it is of the last importance for us to keep constantly in view how much of the happiness of mankind arises from habit, and in the formation of our plans to disregard those prepossessions and prejudices which so often warp the judgment in the conduct of life. “Choose that course of action” (said Pythagoras) “which is best, and custom will soon render it the most agreeable.”

To these very slight hints concerning the regulation of the habits, I shall add a few observations of Dr Paley’s, which appear to me to be solid and judicious, and which afford a favourable specimen of that talent for familiar and happy illustration for which this very popular writer has been so justly celebrated.

“The art in which the secret of human happiness in a great measure consists, is to *set* the habits in such a manner that every change may be a change for the better. The habits themselves are much the same ; for whatever is made habitual becomes smooth, and easy, and nearly indifferent. The return to an old habit is likewise

“ easy, whatever the habit be. Therefore the advantage is with those habits which allow of indulgence in the deviation from them. The luxurious receive no greater pleasure from their dainties than the peasant does from his bread and cheese ; but the peasant whenever he goes abroad finds *a feast*, whereas the Epicure must be well entertained to escape disgust. Those who spend every day at cards, and those who go every day to plough, pass their time much alike ; intent upon what they are about, wanting nothing, regretting nothing, they are both for the time in a state of ease ; but then whatever suspends the occupation of the card-player distresses him ; whereas to the labourer every interruption is a refreshment : and this appears in the different effect that *Sunday* produces on the two, which proves a day of recreation to the one, but a lamentable burden to the other. The man who has learned to live alone feels his spirits enlivened whenever he enters into company, and takes his leave without regret. Another who has long been accustomed to a crowd, experiences in company no elevation of spirits, nor any greater satisfaction than what the man of a retired life finds in his chimney corner. So far their conditions are equal ; but let a change of place, fortune, or situation separate the companion from his circle, his visitors, his club, common-room, or coffee-house, and the difference of advantage in the choice and constitution of the two habits will

“ show itself. Solitude comes to the one clothed
“ with melancholy ; to the other it brings liberty
“ and quiet. You will see the one fretful and rest-
“ less ; at a loss how to dispose of his time till the
“ hour come round that he can forget himself in
“ bed ; the other easy and satisfied, taking up his
“ book or his pipe as soon as he finds himself alone ;
“ ready to admit any little amusement that casts up, or
“ to turn his hands and attention to the first business
“ that presents itself ; or, content without either, to
“ sit still and let his trains of thought glide indolent-
“ ly through his brain, without much use, perhaps,
“ or pleasure, but without *hankering* after anything
“ better, and without irritation. A reader who has
“ inured himself to books of science and argumen-
“ tation, if a novel, a well written pamphlet, an ar-
“ ticle of news, a narrative of a curious voyage, or
“ the journal of a traveller comes in his way, sits
“ down to the repast with relish ; enjoys his enter-
“ tainment while it lasts, and can return when it
“ is over to his graver reading without distaste.
“ Another, with whom nothing will go down but
“ works of humour and pleasantry, or whose curio-
“ sity must be interested by perpetual novelty, will
“ consume a bookseller’s window in half a forenoon,
“ during which time he is rather in search of di-
“ version than diverted ; and as books to his taste
“ are few and short, and rapidly read over, the stock
“ is soon exhausted, when he is left without re-
“ source from this principal supply of harmless
“ amusement.”

As a supplement to the remarks of Paley, I shall quote a short passage from Montaigne, containing an observation relative to the same subject ; which, although stated in a form rather unqualified, seems to me highly worthy of attention. “ We must not
 “ rivet ourselves so fast to our humours and com-
 “ plexions. Our chief business is to know how
 “ to apply ourselves to various customs. For a
 “ man to keep himself tied and bound by necessi-
 “ ty to *one* only course, is but bare existence, not
 “ living. It was an honourable character of the
 “ elder Cato, (‘ huic versatile ingenium sic pariter ad
 “ omnia fuit, ut natum ad id unum diceret, quodcun-
 “ que ageret.’) ‘ So versatile was his genius, that
 “ whatever he took in hand, you would be apt to
 “ say that he was formed for that very thing only.’*
 “ Were I to choose for myself, there is no fashion
 “ so good that I should care to be so wedded to it
 “ as not to have it in my power to disengage my-
 “ self from it. Life is a motion, uneven, irregular,
 “ and ever varying its direction. A man is not his
 “ own friend, much less his own master, but rather
 “ a slave to himself, who is eternally pursuing his
 “ own humour, and such a bigot to his inclinations,
 “ that he is not able to abandon or to alter them.” †

The only thing to be censured in this passage is, that the author makes no distinction between *good* and *bad* habits ; between those which we are induced to cultivate by reason, and by the original prin-

* Liv. lib. 39. c. 40.

† Montaigne, b. iii. c. 3. Cotton’s Translation.

ciples of our nature ; and those which reason admonishes us to shun, on account of the mischievous consequences with which they are likely to be followed. With respect to these two classes of habits considered in contrast with each other, it is extremely worthy of observation, that the former are incomparably more easy in the acquisition than the latter ; while the latter, when once acquired, are (probably, in consequence of this very circumstance, the difficulty of overcoming our natural propensities) of at least equal efficacy in subjecting all the powers of the will to their dominion.

That such habits as are reasonable and agreeable to nature are more easily acquired than others of a contrary description, is an old and common remark. It is well expressed, and very happily illustrated in the following passage of Quintilian. “ The discipline of a virtuous and happy life is short and easy, nature having formed us for whatever is excellent, and having so facilitated to a willing mind every acquisition which tends to its improvement, as to render it wonderful that vice should be so prevalent in the world. For as to fishes water is the appropriate element ; to terrestrial animals the dry land ; and to birds the surrounding atmosphere ; so to man it is certainly more easy to follow the suggestions of *Nature* than to pursue a plan of life contrary to her obvious intentions and arrangements.” *

* “ Brevis est institutio vitæ honestæ beatæque. Natura enim nos ad mentem optimam genuit: adeoque discere meliora

Of the peculiar difficulty of shaking off such inveterate habits, as were at first the most repugnant to our taste and inclinations, we have a daily and a melancholy proof in the case of those individuals who have suffered themselves to become slaves to tobacco, to opium, and to other intoxicating drugs, which, so far from possessing the attractions of pleasurable sensations, are in a great degree revolting to an unvitiated palate. The same thing is exemplified in many of those *acquired tastes* which it is the great object of the art of cookery to create and to gratify ; and still more remarkably in those fatal habits which sometimes steal on the most amiable characters, under the seducing form of social enjoyment, and of a temporary respite from the evils of life.

I am inclined, however, to think that Montaigne meant to restrict his observations chiefly, if not solely, to habits which are indifferent or nearly indifferent in their *moral* tendency, and that all he is to be understood as asserting amounts to this, that we ought not, in matters connected with the *accommodations* of human life, to enslave ourselves to one set of habits in preference to another. In this sense his doctrine is just and important ; and I have only to add to it, that in *this* point of view also virtuous

“ volentibus promptum est, ut verè intuenti mirum sit illud
 “ magis, malos esse tam multos. Nam ut aqua piscibus, ut
 “ sicca terrenis, circumfusus nobis spiritus volucris convenit,
 “ ita certè facilius esse oportebat secundùm naturam, quàm
 “ contra eam vivere.”—Quinct. lib. xii. c. 11.

habits possess a distinguished superiority not only over those which are immoral, but over those which are merely innocent or inoffensive, inasmuch as they lead us to associate the idea of happiness with objects which depend infinitely less than any others on the caprice of fortune, or rather with such as every wise and prudent man has it in his power at all times to enjoy. This observation I had occasion to illustrate formerly, when treating of the leading Principles of the Stoical Philosophy.

SECTION IV.

Continuation of the same Subject.

THE foregoing remarks relate to what may be called the essentials of happiness ;—the circumstances which constitute the general state or habit of mind that is necessary to lay a ground-work for every other enjoyment.

This foundation being supposed, the sum of happiness enjoyed by an individual will be proportioned to the degree in which he is able to secure all the various pleasures belonging to our nature.

The most important of these pleasures may be referred to the following heads :—

1. The Pleasures of Activity and of Repose.
2. The Pleasures of Sense.
3. The Pleasures of Imagination.

4. The Pleasures of the Understanding.
5. The Pleasures of the Heart. *

An examination and comparison of these different classes of our enjoyments is necessary, even on the stoical principles, to complete the inquiry concerning happiness, in order to ascertain the relative value of the different objects of choice and rejection.

Such an examination, however, would lead into details inconsistent with the plan, and foreign to the design of this work. To those who choose to prosecute the subject, it opens a field of speculation equally curious and useful, and much less exhausted by moralists than might have been expected from its importance. The following slight hints will be sufficient to justify the classification now mentioned, and may perhaps suggest some useful practical reflections.

I. Pleasures of Activity and of Repose.

I observed before, in treating of our Active Powers, that our occasional propensities to Action and to Repose are in some respects analogous to our bodily appetites. They are common, too, like *them*, to

* To make the enumeration more complete, I might have added the Pleasures of Taste; but as these are confined to a comparatively small number of the species, they did not seem to require a particular consideration at present.

man and to the brutes ; for every animal we know is prompted by an instinctive impulse to take that degree of exercise which is conducive to health and vigour, and is prevented from passing the bounds of moderation, by that languor and desire of repose which are consequences of continued exertion.

A fact perfectly similar to this takes place with respect to the mind. We are impelled by nature to the exercise of its different faculties, and we are warned, when we are in danger of overstraining them, by a consciousness of fatigue. In both cases there is a pleasure annexed to the *exercise* of our powers ; and this pleasure seems to be an ultimate fact in our constitution, not resolvable into any more simple or general source of enjoyment. If I were disposed to suspect the possibility of any such reference, it would be to the pleasure arising from the consciousness of *power*, of which I treated formerly, when considering our Natural Desires. But although these pleasures are commonly so blended together, that it is difficult to discriminate them, it might be clearly shown (if it were worth while to enter into the metaphysical discussion) that they have each their distinct origin in our frame. As the view of the subject, however, which I mean to take at present is entirely practical, I do not think it necessary for me to attempt drawing the line between two classes of enjoyment so very nearly allied ; and it is for the same reason that I have avoided lengthening the enumeration, by stating the pleasures of *power* as a separate article, the

distinction between these and the pleasures of *activity* being too subtle and refined to strike the generality of readers without a commentary.

It is not only with the pleasures of *power* that those of *activity* may be united. They blend also with all the various pleasures of sense, of the imagination, of the understanding, and of the heart ; and it is owing to the different effects of these combinations that some kinds of activity are more delightful than others. And as the pleasures of activity are heightened by their union with other gratifications, so a certain mixture of activity is necessary to give a zest to every other enjoyment, or at least to prevent them from ending in languor and satiety. Hence the satisfaction with which we may continue to enjoy the pleasures of the understanding during a length of time, to which it is impossible, by any artifice, to extend the more passive gratifications of the senses or of the imagination,—an important circumstance in our constitution, which I shall afterwards illustrate more fully.

As I made several observations on the pleasures of activity, when attempting to reconcile the physical evils in the condition of man with a beneficent intention in the Author of his being, I shall not enlarge farther on that topic at present. The reasonings that were then stated, were, I flatter myself, sufficient to authorize the general conclusion, that those very circumstances in the order of Providence, on which gloomy moralists have founded their complaints, are impressed with the strongest marks

of beneficent wisdom. That, during our progress through life, we are destined never to arrive at the completion of our desires, but to be invited from stage to stage, by one phantom of hope succeeding to another, is obviously a necessary part of that constitution of things which appointed constant activity to be an essential ingredient in human happiness.

Of these pleasures of *activity* which invite man during the period of his vigour to a continued course of exertion, either of body or mind, the pleasures of *repose* may be considered as, in our present state of imperfection, a natural and a necessary consequence. They presuppose a *general* state of activity, without which they can hardly be said to have any existence, and for resuming which they prepare and invigorate the mind, as sleep prepares and disposes us for entering on the duties of our waking hours. In this way they contribute not inconsiderably from the beginning to the close of life to diversify and to increase the sum of our enjoyments; but they constitute in a still more essential manner, as Dr Paley has remarked, the supreme and the appropriate happiness of *old age*.

“ It is not for youth alone,” (says this pleasing writer) “ that the Great Parent of Creation hath provided. Happiness is found in the arm chair of dozing age, as well as in either the sprightliness of the dance or the animation of the chase. To novelty, to acuteness of sensation, to hope, to ardour of pursuit, succeeds, what is in no incon-

“siderable a degree an equivalent for them all,—
“ ‘perception of ease.’ Herein is the exact differ-
“ence between the young and the old. The young
“are not happy but when enjoying pleasure ; the
“old are happy when free from pain. And this
“constitution suits with the degrees of animal
“power which they respectively possess. The vi-
“gour of youth was to be stimulated to action by
“impatience of rest ; whilst, to the imbecility of
“age, quietness and repose become positive grati-
“fications. This same perception of ease oftentimes
“renders old age a condition of great comfort,
“especially when riding at its anchor after a busy
“or tempestuous life. It is well described by
“Rousseau, to be the interval of repose between the
“hurry and the end of life.”*

To this passage from Dr Paley I shall subjoin an extract from a very different writer, M. Diderot, —an author of unquestionable eloquence and ingenuity, but who unfortunately has not always employed his great talents for the best purposes. The passage which I am to quote is, I think, far from being unexceptionable in point of sound philosophy, inasmuch as it seems to ascribe to a state of *repose* a positive and appropriate pleasure, independently of any reference to the lassitude produced by a former state of exertion. It is at the same time, in my opinion, highly exceptionable in point of good taste ; and may perhaps be produced without much injustice as a fair specimen of that false refinement,

* Natural Theology, pp. 493, 494.

both in thought and in expression, which was fashionable among other philosophers of the same school.

“ He alone has experienced the ineffable charm
“ of a *delicious repose*, whose organs were sensible
“ and delicate ; who received from nature a soul
“ that was tender, and a frame that was voluptu-
“ ous ; who enjoyed perfect health ; who was in
“ the flower of his years ; whose mind was over-
“ cast with no cloud, whose heart was agitated by
“ no keen emotion ; who, after the fatigue of some
“ gentle exertion, felt, in all the parts of his frame,
“ a pleasure so equally diffused, that he was un-
“ conscious of any local sensation. In that mo-
“ ment of relaxation and enchantment, no memory
“ remained with him of the past, no desire of the
“ future, no anxiety about the present. The flight
“ of time was unperceived ; for his happiness flowed
“ from himself, and seemed part of his being. By
“ an imperceptible movement he was tending to-
“ wards sleep ; but during the slow and insensible
“ transition, while all his powers were sinking, he
“ was still enough awake to enjoy the delights of
“ his existence ; an enjoyment, however, altogether
“ passive, which excited no attachment to itself,—
“ suggested no matter for reflection,—was accompa-
“ nied with no sentiment of self-congratulation.
“ If it were possible to form a steady conception of
“ this situation so wholly sensitive, where all the
“ faculties of mind and of body are alive without
“ being in action, and to attach to this *delicious*

“ *quietism*, the idea of immutability, a notion would
 “ be formed of the highest and purest happiness
 “ that the mind of man is able to imagine.” *

* Encyclopédie, Art. *Délicieux*.

I recollect to have heard somewhat more than forty years ago, at the time when Diderot's reputation was at its highest point in his own country, this passage quoted by some of his Parisian friends and admirers, as one of the richest gems to be found in his writings. That it was considered as such by himself I have no doubt, not only from the scrupulous care with which he has evidently weighed every expression it contains, but from the circumstance of his giving a place in this magnificent work to so unmeaning an article. Nothing but the overweening partiality of an author could have induced Diderot to introduce into a book of science such a comment consisting of mere *verbiage*, upon the import of a word which stood in need of no explanation. I subjoin the original at length as a sort of literary curiosity.

“ *Délicieux* : le terme est propre à l'organe du goût ; nous di-
 “ sons d'un mets, d'un vin, qu'il est *délicieux*, lorsque le palais
 “ en est flatté le plus agréablement qu'il est possible. Le *dé-*
 “ *licieux* est le plaisir extrême de la sensation du goût. On a
 “ généralisé son acception, et l'on a dit d'un séjour qu'il est
 “ *délicieux*, lorsque tous les objets qu'on y rencontre reveillent
 “ les idées les plus douces, ou excitent les sensations les plus
 “ agréables. Le suave extrême est le *délicieux* des odeurs. Le
 “ repos a aussi son *délice*. Mais qu'est-ce qu'un *repos délicieux* ?
 “ Celui-là seul en a connu le charme inexprimable, dont les or-
 “ ganes étoient sensibles et délicats ; qui avoit reçu de la na-
 “ ture une ame tendre et un tempérament voluptueux ; qui
 “ jouissoit d'une santé parfaite ; qui se trouvoit à la fleur de
 “ son âge ; qui n'avoit l'esprit troublé d'aucun nuage, l'ame agi-
 “ tée d'aucune émotion trop vive ; qui sortoit d'une fatigue
 “ douce et légère, et qui éprouvoit dans toutes les parties de
 “ son corps un plaisir si également répandu, qu'il ne se faisoit

As these dreams, however, of an Epicurean happiness are but too flattering to the romantic indolence of youthful minds, it may be useful to refer the reader (for the passage is much too long for a quotation) to another picture drawn by a still superior hand ; and (what is of still greater consequence) a picture copied faithfully after nature. I allude to the truly eloquent description given by Gibbon of the primitive monks,—a set of men whose notions of the Sovereign Good were certainly very different from those of Diderot, but whose melancholy history affords an instructive lesson to *all* who search for happiness in a total exemption from la-

“ distinguer dans aucune. Il ne lui restoit dans ce moment
 “ d’enchantement et de foiblesse, ni mémoire du passé, ni desir
 “ de l’avenir, ni inquiétude sur le présent. Le tems avoit
 “ cessé de couler pour lui, parce qu’il existoit tout en lui-
 “ même ; le sentiment de son bonheur ne s’affoiblissoit qu’avec
 “ celui de son existence. Il passoit par un mouvement imper-
 “ ceptible, de la veille au sommeil ; mais sur ce passage imper-
 “ ceptible, au milieu de la défaillance de toutes ses facultés, il
 “ veilloit encore assez, sinon pour penser à quelque chose de
 “ distinct, du moins pour sentir toute la douceur de son exist-
 “ ence : Mais il en jouissoit d’une jouissance tout-à-fait pas-
 “ sive, sans y être attaché, sans y réfléchir, sans s’en rejouir,
 “ sans s’en féliciter ;—si l’on pouvoit fixer par la pensée cette si-
 “ tuation de pur sentiment, où toutes les facultés du corps et
 “ de l’ame sont vivantes sans être agissantes, et attacher à ce
 “ quiétisme délicieux l’idée d’immuitabilité, on se formeroit la
 “ notion du bonheur le plus grand et le plus pur que l’homme
 “ puisse imaginer.”

If the reader is desirous to see a longer and still more elaborate specimen of the same sort of writing by the same hand, he may turn to the article *Jouissance*, in the *Encyclopédie*.

bour, both of body and mind. In this unnatural state, not even the prospect of lasting bliss beyond the grave was able long to support the alacrity of the spirits, or to ward off those miseries which habits of solitary inaction entail on the imagination. “The “vacant hours of the monk” (says Gibbon) “heavily rolled along without business or pleasure, and “before the close of each day he had repeatedly “cursed the tedious progress of the sun.” * The whole of the passage may be perused with much advantage ; and abundantly justifies an assertion of Dr Ferguson’s, that even the complaints of the *sufferer* are not so sure a mark of misery as the stare of the *languid*. †

II. *Pleasures of Sense.*

I mentioned, in the second place, the Pleasures of *Sense* ; another class of our enjoyments which is common to man and to the brutes ; and which, notwithstanding the space they occupy in the imagination of most men, must be allowed to stand at the very bottom of the scale, whether we regard them in connection with the nobler principles of our nature, or estimate their value from the accession they bring to the sum of our happiness. When I say this I would not be understood to dispute the real and substantial addition which they make to our

* Decline and Fall, &c. Vol. VI. p. 262. Ed. of 1792.

† Essay on the History of Civil Society, Part i. sect. 7.

happiness, in so far as it is in our power to command them. I would only observe, that their intensity is in general greatly overrated, in consequence of certain accessory pleasures of the imagination or of the heart, which are commonly associated with them. By means of these, too, their grossness is kept out of view, and they appear with many borrowed attractions to the inexperienced and unsuspecting minds of youth. No epicure is to be found who will openly plead the cause of private and solitary sensuality ; or who will maintain that our animal gratifications would form an important part of human happiness, if divested of those recommendations which they derive from the fancy, and from the social enjoyments with which they are blended.

But whatever may be the intensity and the value of these pleasures during the time we enjoy them, it is altogether impossible to make them fill up any considerable portion of human life. Their province is circumscribed by nature within very narrow bounds, and every attempt to extend these frustrates its own purpose. It does not appear, therefore, that nature intended that the pursuit of them should be considered as a serious or important object ; and, indeed, wherever this is suffered to take place, it is at the expence of all the worthier principles of our constitution. Health, and fortune, and fame seldom fail to fall sacrifices in the progress of the evil, which, in its last stage, destroys the intellectual powers and the moral sensibilities, and pro-

duces a languor and depression of mind which is the completion of human misery.

To all this it may be added, that the pleasures of sense are confined to the very moment of gratification, affording no satisfaction in the retrospect, like that which follows our intellectual exertions, and still more our good actions.

The result of these observations is, *not* that the pleasures of sense are unworthy the regard of a wise man, but that they should be confined within those limits which are marked out by the obvious intentions of nature. That they are to be enjoyed in the greatest perfection in a life of virtue, we have the testimony of Epicurus himself; according to whose system prudence, temperance, and the other virtues, derive all their value from their tendency to increase the sum of bodily enjoyment, and to lessen that of bodily suffering,—a most erroneous and absurd doctrine undoubtedly, when considered in connection with the theory of morals, but highly interesting in a *practical* light, as an acknowledgment from the professed votaries of pleasure, that a life of virtue (even if our views did not extend beyond the present scene) is the truest wisdom.

III. *Pleasures of the Imagination.*

The Pleasures of the *Imagination* are unquestionably of a higher rank than those of *Sense*, and may

be protracted to a much longer period without any danger of injuring the health, or of impairing the faculties, or of exhausting that inestimable fund of constitutional enjoyment, which we commonly express by the phrase *animal spirits*. On the contrary, they have a tendency to raise the taste above the grossness of sensuality, and to diminish the temptation to vicious indulgences, by furnishing agreeable and innocent resources for filling up the blanks of life. By supplying us, too, with pleasures more refined than those the senses afford, they gradually prepare us for the still higher enjoyments which belong to us as rational and moral beings; and indeed, when properly regulated, they may be rendered subservient, in a high degree, both to our intellectual and moral improvement.

Even to this class of our pleasures, however, certain limits are prescribed by nature; for although in enjoying them the mind is not quite so passive as in receiving the gratifications of sense, yet many of its most important principles are left wholly unemployed; and accordingly, when they are prolonged beyond their due bounds, we lose all relish for them, and feel a desire of more active and more interesting engagements. I shall not insist at present on the effects which result to the moral character from an excessive indulgence in the pleasures of the imagination, in consequence of their tendency to unfit us for action, and to give us a disrelish for real life, as my object in these observations is merely to consider them as sources of enjoyment. I

have treated besides of this subject at some length in the first volume of the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*.

IV. *Pleasures of the Understanding.*

The Pleasures which I have referred to the *Understanding* might perhaps have been characterized more explicitly, “as pleasures arising from the exercise of our reasoning and of our inventive powers.” Of this kind is the pleasure of *investigation*, (which resolves partly into the pleasure of activity, partly into that resulting from the employment of skill, partly into that arising from expectation and hope, or, in other words, from the anticipation of discovery.) 2. The pleasure of *generalization*, or of rising from particular truths to comprehensive theorems,—a process which, beside the satisfaction it yields by the relief it brings to the memory, communicates to us a sentiment of our intellectual power, by subjecting completely to our command a mass of information which before only served to distract our attention, and to oppress our faculties. 3. To all this we may add, the pleasure resulting from the gratification of *curiosity*, and from the discovery of *truth*, of which I had formerly occasion to treat under the article of the Active Powers. With these pleasures, too, which are peculiar to the understanding, various accessory ones are combined ; the pleasure (for example) of ex-

tensive utility, when our studies happen to be directed to objects interesting to mankind ; the pleasure arising from the gratification of ambition ; and the social satisfaction of communicating our knowledge to others. Perhaps, however, the principal recommendation of this class of our pleasures is derived from the constant and inexhaustible resources they supply to the mind in its progress through life. In this respect they possess many advantages over the pleasures of imagination ; not only as they depend much less on the state of the spirits, but as they may be extended to a much longer period without satiety or a desire of change, and are frequently enjoyed with increasing relish in old age ; while, on the other hand, the objects which interest the imagination gradually lose their charms when we begin to engage in the business of the world, and furnish at best but an amusement and relaxation to diversify our habitual and more serious occupations. Upon the whole, among the various *subordinate* pursuits to which men are led to devote themselves by inclination or taste, (I say *subordinate*, for I do not speak at present of our moral duties,) a turn for science may be safely pronounced to be the happiest of any ; and *that* which we may venture with the greatest confidence to recommend to youth as the most solid foundation for the future comfort of their lives ; more particularly when we consider how very little the pleasures of the understanding depend on external circumstances, and on the caprice of fortune. The hap-

piest individuals certainly whom I have happened to know have been men, who, with a due relish for the pleasures of imagination, have devoted themselves steadily and ardently to philosophical pursuits, and more particularly to the study of the severer sciences.

V. *Pleasures of the Heart.*

Under this title I comprehend the Pleasures of Benevolence, of Friendship, of Love, of Pity, of enjoying the Favour and Esteem of others, and above all, the pleasure resulting from the consciousness of doing our Duty ; the purest and most exquisite enjoyments undoubtedly of which we have any experience ; and which, by blending in one way or other with our other gratifications, impart to them their principal charm. This has been often remarked with respect to the pleasures of sense ; and the same remark may be extended to the pleasures of activity and of the understanding.

The practical conclusion resulting from the inquiry is, that the wisest plan of economy, with respect to our pleasures, is not merely compatible with a strict observance of the rules of morality, but is, in a great measure, comprehended in these rules ; and therefore, that the happiness, as well as the perfection of our nature, consists in doing our duty with as little solicitude about the event as is consistent with the weakness of hu-

manity. Nothing is indeed more remarkable in this view of human nature than the tendency of virtuous habits to systematize the conduct for the purpose of happiness, and to open up all the various sources of enjoyment in our constitution without suffering any one to encroach upon the rest. They establish a proper balance among our different principles of action, and by doing so produce a greater sum of enjoyment on the whole, than we could have obtained by allowing any one in particular to gain an ascendant over our conduct. It was from a mistaken view of this very important fact that the Epicurean system of old arose, as well as those modern theories which represent *virtue* as only a different name for rational *self-love*. They indeed coincide so wonderfully together, as to illustrate, in the most striking manner, the *unity* as well as the *beneficence* of design in the human constitution. But still, (as I before remarked) notwithstanding these happy effects of a virtuous life, the principle of duty, and the desire of happiness are radically distinct from each other. The peace of mind, indeed, which is the immediate reward of good actions, and the sense of merit with which they are accompanied, create, independently of experience, a very strong presumption in favour of the connection between happiness and virtue; but the facts in human life which justify this conclusion are not obvious to careless spectators; nor would philosophers in every age have agreed so unanimously in adopting it, if they had not been

led to the truth by a shorter and more direct process, than an examination of the remote consequences of virtuous and of vicious conduct.

To this observation it may be added, that if the desire of happiness were the sole, or even the ruling principle of action in a good man, it could scarcely fail to frustrate its own object, by filling his mind with anxious conjectures about futurity, and with perplexing calculations of the various chances of good and evil ; whereas he, whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty, conducts himself in the business of life with boldness, consistency, and dignity ; and finds himself rewarded by that happiness which so often eludes the pursuit of those who exert every faculty of the mind in order to attain it.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

SECTION I.

Of the different Theories which have been formed concerning the Object of Moral Approbation.

IT was before remarked, that the different theories of Virtue which have prevailed in modern times have arisen chiefly from attempts to trace all the branches of our duty to one principle of action ; such as a rational self-love, benevolence, justice, or a disposition to obey the will of God.

That none of these theories is agreeable to fact may be collected from the reasonings which have been already stated. The harmony, however, which exists among our various good dispositions, and their general coincidence in determining us to the same course of life, bestows on all of them, when skilfully proposed, a certain degree of plausibility.

The systematical spirit from which they have taken their rise, although a fertile source of error, has not been without its use ; inasmuch as it has

roused the attention of ingenious men to the most important of all studies, that of the end and destination of human life. The facility, at the same time, with which so great a variety of consequences may all be traced from distinct principles, affords a demonstration of that unity and consistency of design, which is still more conspicuous in the moral than in the material world.

SECTION II.

Of the General Definition of Virtue.

Having taken a cursory survey of the chief branches of our Duty, we are prepared to enter on the general question concerning the *Nature and Essence of Virtue*. In fixing on the arrangement of this part of my subject, it appeared to me more agreeable to the established rules of philosophising, to consider, first, our duties in detail; and after having thus laid a solid foundation in the way of analysis, to attempt to rise to the *general idea* in which all our duties concur, than to circumscribe our inquiries, at our first outset, within the limits of an arbitrary and partial definition. What I have now to offer, therefore, will consist of little more than some obvious and necessary consequences from principles which have been already stated.

The various duties which have been consider-

ed all agree with each other in one common quality, that of being *obligatory* on rational and voluntary agents ; and they are all enjoined by the same authority,—*the authority of conscience*. These duties, therefore, are but different articles of *one law*, which is properly expressed by the word *Virtue*.

An observation to the same purpose is put into the mouth of Socrates by Plato. “ So likewise concerning the virtues ; though they are many and various, there is one common idea belonging to them all, by which they are virtues.” Οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν, καὶ εἰ πολλαὶ καὶ παντὸς ἀπαί εἰσιν, ἐν γὰρ τῇ εἰδὸς ταύτῃ ἀπασαὶ ἐχρῶσι δι’ ὃ εἰσιν ἀρεταί. *

As all the virtues are enjoined by the same authority (the authority of conscience), the man whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty, will observe all the different virtues with the same reverence and the same zeal. He who lives in the *habitual* neglect of any one of them shows plainly, that where his conduct happens to coincide with what the rules of morality prescribe, it is owing merely to an accidental agreement between his duty and his inclination ; and that he is not actuated by that motive which can alone render our conduct meritorious. It is justly said, therefore, that to live in the habitual practice of any one vice, is to throw off our allegiance to conscience and to our Maker, as decidedly as if we had violated all the rules which duty prescribes ; and it is in this sense, I presume, that we ought to interpret

* Plato in Men. Ed. Serr. Tom. II. p. 72.

that passage of the Sacred Writings, in which it is said, “ *He who keepeth the whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.*”

The word *virtue*, however, (as I shall have occasion to remark more particularly in the next section) is applied not only to express a particular course of external conduct, but to express *a particular species or description of human character*. When so applied, it seems properly to denote a *habit* of mind, as distinguished from *occasional acts* of duty. It was formerly said that the characters of men receive their denominations of covetous, voluptuous, ambitious, &c. from the particular active principle which prevailingly influences the conduct. A man, accordingly, whose ruling or habitual principle of action is a sense of duty, or a regard to what is right, may be properly denominated virtuous. Agreeably to this view of the subject, the ancient Pythagoreans defined virtue to be Ἐξίς του δειοντος,* the oldest definition of virtue of which we have any account, and one of the most unexceptionable which is yet to be found in any system of philosophy.

This account of virtue coincides very nearly with what I conceive to be Dr Reid’s, from some passages in his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. Virtue he seems to consider as consisting “ in a “ fixed purpose or resolution to act according to “ our sense of duty.”

“ Suppose a man” (says he) “ to have exercised

* Gale’s *Opuscula Mythologica*, &c. &c. p. 690.

“ his intellectual and moral faculties so far as to
“ have distinct notions of justice and injustice, and
“ of the consequences of both, and after due deliberation to have formed a fixed purpose to adhere inflexibly to justice, and never to handle the wages of iniquity :

“ Is not this the man whom we should call a just man ? We consider the moral virtues as inherent in the mind of a good man, even where there is no opportunity of exercising them. And what is it in the mind which we can call the virtue of justice when it is not exercised ? It can be nothing but a fixed purpose or determination to act according to the rules of justice when there is opportunity.”

With all this I perfectly agree. It is the fixed purpose to do what is *right*, which evidently constitutes what we call a *virtuous disposition*. But it appears to me that virtue, considered as an attribute of character, is more properly defined by the *habit* which the fixed purpose gradually forms, than by the fixed purpose itself. It is from the external habit alone that other men can judge of the purpose ; and it is from the uniformity and spontaneity of his habit that the individual himself must judge how far his purposes are sincere and steady.

I have said that this account of *virtue* coincides with the definition of it given by the ancient Pythagoreans ; and it also coincides with the opinion of Aristotle, by whom the ethical doctrine of the Py-

thagoreans was rendered much more complete and satisfactory. According to this philosopher the different virtues are “*practical habits, voluntary in their origin*, and agreeable to right reason.”* This last philosopher seems indeed to have considered the subject of *habits* in general more attentively than any other writer of antiquity ; and he has suggested some important hints with respect to them, which well deserve the attention of those who may turn their thoughts to this very interesting class of facts in the human constitution.

In referring to these doctrines of the ancient schools, I am far from proceeding on the supposition, that questions of science are to be decided by authority. But I own it always appears to me to afford a strong presumption in favour of any conclusion concerning the principles of human nature, when we find it sanctioned by the judgment of those who have been led to it by separate and independent processes of reasoning. For the same reason I think it of consequence to remark the coincidence

* ‘Ἐξ εἰς πρακτικαὶ—ἐφ’ ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐκαστοί, &c. (Aristotle’s Ethics, Book iii. chap. v.) Immediately after, Aristotle excellently observes, (from an evident anxiety to impress on his readers the necessary dependence of morality on the free agency of man ;) “ Actions and habits are not precisely in the same sense voluntary ; the former are voluntary throughout, from beginning to end ; but the beginnings only of habits, which gain force, like maladies, by degrees, until they become irresistible ; even these, however, are also voluntary, since their causes were such, namely, the actions by which they were formed.”—(Aristotle’s Ethics and Politics, by Dr Gillies, Vol. I. p. 308.)

between the account now given of *Virtue* and that of Mr Hobbes, one of the most sceptical, but, at the same time, one of the most acute and original of our English metaphysicians. “Virtue” (says he) “is the habit of doing according to those laws of Nature that tend to our preservation; and vice is the habit of doing the contrary.” The definition indeed is faulty, in so far as it involves the author’s selfish theory of morals; but in considering the word *virtue* as expressive of a *habit of action*, it approaches nearer to the truth than the greater part of the definitions of virtue to be found in the writings of the moderns.

These observations lead to an explanation of what has at first sight the appearance of paradox in the ethical doctrines of Aristotle, that where there is self-denial there is no virtue. That the merit of particular actions is increased by the self-denial with which they are accompanied cannot be disputed; but it is only when we are *learning* the practice of our duties that this self-denial is exercised, (for the practice of morality, as well as of everything else, is facilitated by repeated acts;) and therefore, if the word virtue be employed to express that *habit* of mind which it is the great object of a good man to confirm, it will follow, that, in proportion as he approaches to it, his efforts of self-denial must diminish, and that all occasion for them would cease if his end were completely attained.

The definition of virtue given by Aristotle, as consisting in “right practical habits *voluntary in*

“ *their origin*,” is well illustrated by what Plutarch has told us of the means by which he acquired the mastery over his irascible passions. “ I have always approved” (says he) “ of the engagements and vows imposed on themselves from motives of religion, by certain philosophers, to abstain from wine, or from some other favourite indulgence, for the space of a year. I have also approved of the determination taken by others not to deviate from the truth, even in the lightest conversation, during a particular period. Comparing my own mind with theirs, and conscious that I yielded to none of them in reverence for God, I tasked myself, in the first instance, not to give way to anger upon any occasion for several days. I afterwards extended this resolution to a month or longer ; and having thus made a trial of what I could do, I have learned at length never to speak but with gentleness, and so carefully to watch over my temper as never to purchase the short and unprofitable gratification of venting my resentment at the expence of a lasting and humiliating remorse.” *

I must not dismiss this topic without recommending, not merely to the perusal, but to the diligent study of all who have a taste for moral inquiries, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which he has examined, with far greater accuracy than any other author of antiquity, the nature of *habits* considered in their relation to our moral constitution.

* Plut. de Ira.

The whole treatise is indeed of great value, and, with the exception of a few passages, almost justifies the very warm and unqualified eulogium pronounced upon it by a learned divine (Dr Rennel) before the university of Cambridge,—an eulogium in which he goes so very far as to assert of this work, “that it affords not only the most perfect
 “specimen of scientific morality, but exhibits also
 “the powers of the most compact and best constructed system *which the human intellect ever*
 “*produced upon any subject* ; enlivening occasionally great severity of method, and strict precision
 “of terms, by the sublimest though soberest splendour of diction.” *

For the use of *English* readers an excellent translation of Aristotle’s *Ethics* and also of his *Politics* has been published by Dr Gillies ; and indeed I do not know of any treatises, among the many remains of antiquity, which could have been selected as a more important accession to the stock of our national literature.

SECTION III.

*On an Ambiguity in the words Right and Wrong,
 Virtue and Vice.*

The epithets Right and Wrong, Virtuous and

* Quoted by Dr Gillies, Vol. I. p. 527.

Vicious, are applied sometimes to *external actions*, and sometimes to the *intentions of the agent*. A similar ambiguity may be remarked in the corresponding words in other languages.

This ambiguity is owing to various causes, which it is not necessary at present to trace. Among other circumstances, it is owing to the association of ideas, which, as it leads us to connect notions of elegance or of meanness with many arbitrary expressions in language, so it often leads us to connect notions of right and wrong with *external actions*, considered abstractly from the motives which produced them. It is owing (at least in part) to this, that a man who has been involuntarily the author of any calamity to another, can hardly by any reasoning banish his feelings of remorse; and, on the other hand, however wicked our *purposes* may have been, if by any accident we have been prevented from carrying them into execution, we are apt to consider ourselves as far less culpable than if we had perpetrated the crimes that we had intended. It is much in the same manner that we think it less criminal to mislead others by hints, or looks, or actions, than by a verbal lie; and in general, that we think our guilt diminished if we can only contrive to accomplish our ends without employing those external *signs*, or those external *means*, with which we have been accustomed to associate the notions of guilt and infamy. Shakespeare has painted with philosophical accuracy this natural subterfuge of a vicious mind, in which the sense of duty still retains

some authority, in one of the exquisite scenes between King John and Hubert :

“ Hadst thou but shook thy head, and made a pause
“ When I spake darkly what I purposed ;
“ Or turn’d an eye of doubt upon my face ;
“ Or bade me *tell my tale in express words* ;
“ Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
“ And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me.
“ But thou didst understand me *by my signs*,
“ And didst *in signs again parley with sin*.”

As this twofold application of the words Right and Wrong to the intentions of the mind, and to external actions, has a tendency, in the common business of life, to affect our opinions concerning the merits of individuals, so it has misled the theoretical speculations of some very eminent philosophers in their inquiries concerning the principles of morals. It was to obviate the confusion of ideas arising from this ambiguity of language that the distinction between *absolute and relative rectitude* was introduced into ethics ; and as the distinction is equally just and important, it will be proper to explain it particularly, and to point out its application to one or two of the questions which have been perplexed by that vagueness of expression which it is our object at present to correct.

An action may be said to be absolutely right, when it is in every respect suitable to the circumstances in which the agent is placed ; or, in other words, when it is such as, with perfectly good intentions, under the guidance of an enlightened and

well-informed understanding, he would have performed.

An action may be said to be relatively right, when the intentions of the agent are sincerely good, whether his conduct be suitable to his circumstances or not.

According to these definitions, an action may be right in one sense and wrong in another ; an ambiguity in language, which, how obvious soever, has not always been attended to by the writers on morals.

It is the relative rectitude of an action which determines the moral desert of the agent ; but it is its absolute rectitude which determines its utility to his worldly interests, and to the welfare of society. And it is only so far as absolute and relative rectitude coincide, that utility can be affirmed to be a quality of virtue.

A strong sense of duty will indeed induce us to avail ourselves of all the talents we possess, and of all the information within our reach, to act agreeably to the rules of absolute rectitude. And if we fail in doing so, our negligence is criminal. “ Crimes committed through ignorance,” (as Aristotle has very judiciously observed,) “ are only excusable when the ignorance is involuntary ; for when the cause of it lies in ourselves, it is then justly punishable. The ignorance of those laws which all may know if they will, does not excuse the breach of them ; and neglect is not pardonable where attention ought to be bestowed. But per-

“ haps we are incapable of attention. This, however, is our own fault ; since the incapacity has been contracted by our continual carelessness ; as the evils of injustice and intemperance are contracted by the daily commission of iniquity, and the daily indulgence in voluptuousness. For such as our actions are, such must our habits become.” *

Notwithstanding, however, the truth and the importance of this doctrine, the general principle already stated remains incontrovertible, that in *every particular instance* our duty consists in doing what appears to us to be *right* at the time ; and if, while we follow this rule, we should incur any blame, our demerit does not arise from acting according to an erroneous judgment, but from our previous misemployment of the means we possessed for correcting the errors to which our judgment is liable. †

From these principles it follows, that actions, although materially right, are not meritorious with respect to the agent, unless performed from a sense of duty. This conclusion, indeed, has been disputed by Mr Hume, upon grounds which I cannot stop to examine ; ‡ but its truth is necessarily implied in the foregoing reasonings, and it is perfectly consonant to the sentiments of the sound-

* Aristotle's Ethics by Gillies, p. 305.

† A distinction similar to that now made between absolute and relative rectitude was expressed among the schoolmen by the phrases *material* and *formal virtue*.

‡ Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. III. p. 41. *et seq.* First Edit. “ I suppose a person to have lent me a sum of money,” &c. &c.

est moralists, both ancient and modern. Aristotle inculcates this doctrine in many parts of his *Ethics*. In one passage he represents it as essential to virtuous actions, that the actions are done ἐνεκα τῆς καλῆς ; * and in another place he says ἐστὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ ἡ εὐπραξία τέλος. †

To the same purpose also Lord Shaftesbury. “ In this case alone it is we call any creature worthy or virtuous, when it can attain to the speculation or sense of what is morally good or ill, admirable or blameable, right or wrong. For though we may vulgarly call an ill horse vicious, yet we never say of a good one, nor of any mere changing or idiot, though never so good-natured, that he is worthy or virtuous. So that if a creature be generous, kind, constant, and compassionate, yet, if he cannot reflect on what he himself does or sees others do, so as to take notice of what is worthy and honest, and make that notice or conception of worth and honesty to be an object of his affection, he has not the character of being virtuous, for thus, and no otherwise, he is capable of having a sense of right or wrong.” And elsewhere he observes, “ that if that which restrains a person and holds him to a virtuous-like behaviour, be no affection towards virtue or goodness itself, but towards private good merely, he is not in reality the more virtuous.” ‡

* αἱ δὲ κατ' ἀρετὴν πράξεις καλῆς, καὶ τῆς καλῆς ἐνεκα. Arist. *Ethic. Nic. Lib. iv. cap. i.*

† Ibid. *Lib. vi. cap. v.*

‡ Dr Price, in his *Review*, has made a number of judicious

SECTION IV.

Of the Office and Use of Reason in the Practice of Morality.

I formerly observed that a strong sense of duty, while it leads us to cultivate with care our good dis-

observations on this subject ; and Dr Reid, in his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*, has a particular chapter allotted to the consideration of this very question, “ *whether an action deserving moral approbation must be done with the belief of its being morally good ?*” in which the doctrine he endeavours to establish in opposition to Mr Hume is precisely the same with that which has been now stated. “ The fallacy of Mr Hume’s reasoning,” he observes, “ arises from the double sense of the words *moral goodness*. We ascribe it to actions considered abstractly, without any relation to the agent. We likewise ascribe moral goodness to an agent on account of an action he has done. With respect to the agent, a good action is undoubtedly that in which he applied his intellectual powers properly, in order to judge what he ought to do, and acted according to his best judgment. This is all that can be required of a moral agent, and in this his moral goodness in any good action consists. But is this the goodness which we ascribe to an action considered abstractly ? No, surely. Goodness in an action considered abstractly lies in this, and in this only, that it is an action which ought to be done by those who have the power and opportunity, and the capacity to perceive their obligation to do it. Now, it is evident that the goodness of an action considered abstractly can have no dependence upon the opinion or belief of an agent any more than the truth of a proposition depends upon our believing it

positions, will induce us to avail ourselves of all the means in our power for the wise regulation of our external conduct. The occasions on which it is necessary for us to employ our reason in this way are chiefly the three following :—

1. When we have ground for suspecting that our moral judgments and feelings may have been warped and perverted by the prejudices of education.

I formerly showed that the moral faculty is an original principle of the human constitution, and not the result (as Mandeville and others suppose) of habits superinduced by systems of education planned by politicians and divines. The moral faculty indeed, like the faculty of reason, (which forms the most essential of its elements,) requires care and cultivation for its developement ; and, like reason, it has a gradual progress, both in the case of individuals and of societies. But it does not follow from this that the former is a fictitious principle any more than the latter, with respect to the origin of which I do

“ to be true. But when a man exerts his active powers well or
 “ ill, there is a moral goodness or turpitude which we figura-
 “ tively impute to the action, but which is truly and properly
 “ imputable to the man only ; and this goodness or turpitude
 “ depends *very much* upon the intention and the opinion he had
 “ of his action.”

The only correction I would beg leave to make on the foregoing passage is, that, whereas Dr Reid says, “ the goodness or
 “ turpitude of an action depends *very much* upon the intention
 “ of the agent, and the opinion he had of his action,” I would say that it depends on these circumstances *entirely* or *solely*. This indeed is a consequence following necessarily from his own principles.

not know that any doubts have been suggested by the greatest sceptics.

Although, however, the moral faculty is an original part of the human frame, and although the great laws of morality are engraven on every heart, it is not in this way that the greater part of mankind arrive at their first knowledge of them. The infant mind is formed by the care of our early instructors, and for a long time thinks and acts in consequence of the confidence it reposes in their superior judgment. All this is undoubtedly agreeable to the design of Nature, and, indeed, if the case were otherwise, the business of the world could not possibly go on ; for nothing can be plainer than this, that the multitude, (at least as society is actually constituted,) condemned as they are to laborious employments, inconsistent with the cultivation of their mental faculties, are wholly incapable of forming their own opinions on the most important questions which can occupy the human mind. It is evident, at the same time, that, as no system of education can be perfect, many prejudices must mingle with the most important and best ascertained truths ; and as the truths and the prejudices are both acquired from the same source, the incontrovertible evidence of the one serves, in the progress of human reason, to support and confirm the other. Hence the suspicious and jealous eye with which we ought to regard all those principles which we have at first adopted without due examination,—a duty doubly incumbent on those whose opinions are

likely, from their rank and situation in society, to influence those of the multitude, and whose errors may eventually be instrumental in impairing the morals and the happiness of generations yet unborn.

2. A second instance in which the exercise of *Reason* may be requisite for an enlightened discharge of our *duty*, occurs in those cases where there appears to be an interference between *different duties*, and where of course it seems to be necessary to sacrifice one duty to another.

In the course of the foregoing speculations I have frequently taken notice of the coincidence of all our virtuous principles of action, in pointing out to us the same line of conduct ; and of the systematical consistency and harmony which they have a tendency to produce in the moral character. Notwithstanding, however, this general and indisputable *fact*, it must be owned that cases sometimes occur in which they seem at first view to interfere with each other, and in which, of consequence, the exact path of duty is not altogether so obvious as it commonly is. Thus, every man feels it incumbent on him to have a constant regard to *the welfare of society*, and also to *his own happiness*. *On the whole*, these two interests will be found, by the most superficial inquirer, to be inseparably connected ; but, at the same time, it cannot be denied that cases may be fancied in which it seems necessary to make a sacrifice of the one to the other.

In such cases, when the public happiness is very

great, and the private comparatively inconsiderable, there is no room for hesitation ; but the former may be easily conceived to be diminished, and the latter to be increased to such an amount as to render the exact propriety of conduct very doubtful ; more especially when it is considered, that, *cæteris paribus*, a certain degree of preference to ourselves is not only justifiable but morally *right*. In like manner the attachments of nature or of friendship, or the obligations of gratitude, of veracity, or of justice, may interfere with private or public good ; and it may not be easy to say, whether *all* of these obligations may not sometimes be superseded by paramount considerations of *utility*. At least these are points on which moralists have been arguing for some thousands of years, without having yet come to a determination in which all parties are agreed. It is much in the same manner that the different foundations of *property* may give rise to different *claims* ; and it may be exceedingly difficult to determine, among a variety of *titles*, which of them is entitled to a preference over the others.

The consideration of these nice and puzzling questions in the science of *ethics* has given rise in modern times to a particular department of it, distinguished by the title of *Casuistry* ; the great object of which is to lay down general rules or canons for directing us *how* to act, wherever there is any room for doubt or hesitation ; and which (in the opinion of Mr Smith) has attracted more notice than it would otherwise have done, in consequence

of the practice of auricular confession in Roman Catholic countries.

The absurdity of casuistry is now so universally admitted, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon it. The combinations of circumstances into which individuals may be thrown by the accidents of life may be so infinitely diversified, that it is impossible to comprehend them all in any general description ; and, therefore, all that the moralist can reasonably attempt is to inculcate those good principles, and to recommend those good dispositions, which in their *general tendency* are likely to insure a virtuous conduct ; leaving to individuals the task of exercising their own judgments on those incalculable contingences in which they may be called on to act.

3. When the ends at which our duty prompts us to aim are to be accomplished by means which require choice and deliberation.

Even if the whole of virtue consisted in following steadily one principle of action, still reason would be necessary to direct us to the means. The truth is, nature only recommends certain ends, leaving to ourselves the selection of the most efficient means by which these ends may be obtained. Thus all moralists, whatever may be their particular system, agree in this, that it is one of the chief branches of our duty to promote to the utmost of our power the happiness of that society of which we are members ; but the most ardent zeal for the attainment of this object can be of no avail, unless reason be employed both in ascertaining what are the real constitu-

ents of social and political happiness, and by what means this happiness may be most effectually advanced and secured.

It is owing to the last of these considerations that the study of happiness, both private and public, becomes an important part of the science of ethics. Indeed, without this study, the best dispositions of the heart, whether relating to ourselves or to others, may be in a great measure useless.

The subject of happiness, so far as relates to the individual, has been already considered. The great extent and difficulty of those inquiries which have for their object to ascertain what constitutes the happiness of a community, and by what means it may be most effectually promoted, make it necessary to separate them from the other questions of ethics, and to form them into a distinct branch of the science.

It is not, however, in this respect alone that politics is connected with the other branches of moral philosophy. The provisions which nature has made for the intellectual and moral progress of the species all suppose the existence of the political union; and the particular form which this union happens in the case of any community to assume, determines many of the most important circumstances in the character of the people, and many of those opinions and habits which affect the happiness of private life.

These observations which represent politics as a branch of moral philosophy have been sanctioned

by the opinions of all those authors, both in ancient and modern times, by whom either the one or the other has been cultivated with much success. Among the former it is sufficient to mention the names of Plato and Aristotle, both of whom, but more especially the latter, have left us works on the general principles of policy and government, which may be read with the highest advantage at the present day. As to Socrates, his studies seem to have been chiefly directed to inculcate the duties of private life; and yet in the beautiful enumeration which Xenophon has given of his favourite pursuits, the science of politics is expressly mentioned as an important branch of the philosophy of human nature. “As for himself, *man*, and what related to man, were the only subjects on which he chose to employ himself. To this purpose all his inquiries and conversations turned on what was pious, what impious; what honourable, what base; what just, what unjust; what wisdom, what folly; what courage, what cowardice; what a state or political community; what the character of a statesman or a politician; what a government of men, what the character of one equal to such a government. It was on these and other matters of the same kind that he used to discourse, in which subjects those who were knowing he used to esteem men of honour and goodness, and those who were ignorant to be no better than the basest of slaves.” *

* Mrs Fielding's Translation of Xenophon's Memorabilia.

In modern times the intimate relation between ethics and politics, and the easy transition by which the one perpetually leads the thoughts to the other, may be distinctly traced in the speculations of Grotius, of Locke, of Fenelon, of Montesquieu, of Turgot, of Smith, and (with a very few exceptions) of all that class of writers in France who were distinguished by the name of Economists. I mention these examples chiefly to show that it is not in consequence of any capricious and arbitrary arrangement that these two branches of science are referred to the same academical department in some of our modern universities ; and to illustrate, by an appeal to literary history, the imperfection of those systems of politics which are not founded on the previous study of the nature and duties of man.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX I.

(See Vol. I. p. 326.)

OF MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

SECTION I.

Preliminary Observations.—Explanation of some Ambiguous Terms.

ALL the foregoing inquiries concerning the moral constitution of man, proceed on the supposition that he has a freedom of choice between good and evil, and that, when he deliberately performs an action which he knows to be wrong, he renders himself justly obnoxious to punishment. That this supposition is agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind will not be disputed.

From very early times indeed the truth of the supposition has been called in question by a few speculative men, who have contended that the actions we perform are the necessary result of the constitutions of our minds, operated on by the circumstances of our external situation ; and that what we call moral delinquencies are as much a part of our destiny as the corporeal or intellectual qualities we have received from Nature. The argument in support of this doctrine has been proposed in various forms, and has been frequently urged with the confidence of demonstration.

This question about predestination and free-will has furnished, in all ages and countries, inexhaustible matter of conten-

tion, both to philosophers and divines. In the ancient schools of Greece it is well known how generally and how keenly it was agitated. Among the Mahometans it constitutes one of the principal points of division between the followers of Omar and those of Ali ; and among the ancient Jews it was the subject of endless dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It is scarcely necessary for me to add, what violent controversies it has produced, and still continues to produce, in the Christian world.

As this controversy, like most others in metaphysics, has been involved in much unnecessary perplexity by the ambiguity of language, a few brief remarks on some equivocal terms connected with the question at issue may perhaps add something to the perspicuity and precision of the following reasonings. In stating these remarks, however, I shall not scrupulously confine myself to such as are to bear on my intended argument, but shall avail myself of every opportunity that may occur of correcting those inaccurate modes of speaking which have any connection, however distant, with this important article in the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

The word *volition* is defined by Locke to be “ an act of the mind, knowingly exerting that dominion it takes itself to have over any part of the man, by employing it in, or withholding it from any particular action.” Dr Reid defines it more briefly to be, “ the determination of the mind to do or not to do something which we conceive to be in our power.” He remarks, at the same time, that “ this definition is not strictly logical, inasmuch as *the determination of the mind* is only another term for volition. But it ought to be observed, that the most simple acts of the mind do not admit of being logically defined. The only way to form a precise notion of them is to reflect attentively upon them as we feel them in ourselves. Without this reflection no definition can enable us to reason about them with correctness.”

It is necessary to form a distinct notion of what is meant by the word *volition*, in order to understand the import of the word *will*; for this last word properly expresses that *power* of the mind

of which volition is the *act*, and it is only by attending to what we experience, while we are conscious of the act, that we can understand anything concerning the nature of the power.

The word *will*, however, is not always used in this its proper acceptation, but is frequently substituted for *volition* ; as when I say that my hand moves in obedience to my *will*. This indeed happens to the names of most of the powers of the mind ; that the same word is employed to express the power and the act. Thus imagination signifies both the power and the act of imagining ; abstraction signifies both the power and the act of abstracting, and so in other instances. But although the word *will* may, without departing from the usual forms of speech, be used indiscriminately for the power and the act, the word volition applies only to the latter ; and it would undoubtedly contribute to the distinctness of our reasonings to restrict the signification of the word *will* entirely to the former.

It is not necessary, I apprehend, to enlarge any more on the meaning of these terms. It is to be learned only from careful reflection on what passes in our own minds, and to multiply words upon the subject would only involve it in obscurity.

There is, however, a state of the mind perfectly distinct, both from the power and the act of willing, with which they have been frequently confounded, and of which it may therefore be proper to mention the characteristical marks. The state I refer to is properly called *desire*, the distinction between which and *will* was first clearly pointed out by Mr Locke. “ I find the *will*” (says he) “ often confounded with several “ of the affections, especially *desire*, and that by men who “ would not willingly be thought not to have had very distinct notions of things, and not to have writ very clearly “ about them.”—“ This” (he justly adds) “ has been no small “ occasion of obscurity and mistake in this matter, and therefore is, as much as may be, to be avoided.” The substance of his remarks on the appropriate meaning of these two terms amounts to the two following propositions. 1. That at the same moment a man may desire one thing and will another. 2. That at the same moment a man may have contrary desires, but can-

not have contrary wills. The notions, therefore, which ought to be annexed to the words *will* and *desire* are essentially different.

It will be proper, however, to state Mr Locke's observations in his own words: "He that shall turn his thoughts inwards upon what passes in his own mind when he *wills*, shall see that the will or power of volition is conversant about nothing, but that particular determination of the mind, whereby barely by a thought, the mind endeavours to give rise, continuation, or stop to any action which it takes to be in its power. This well considered plainly shows, that the will is perfectly distinguished from desire, which, in the very same action, may have a quite contrary tendency from that which our wills set us upon. A man whom I cannot deny may oblige me to use persuasions to another, which at the same time I am speaking, I may wish not to prevail on him. In this case, it is plain the will and desire run counter. I *will* the action that tends one way, whilst my desire tends another, and that the direct contrary. A man who, by a violent fit of gout in his limbs, finds a want of appetite in his stomach removed, desires to be eased too of the pain of his feet or hands, (for, wherever there is pain there is a desire to be rid of it;) though yet, while he apprehends that the removal of the pain may translate the noxious humours to a more vital part, his *will* is never determined to any one action that may serve to remove this pain. Whence it is evident that desiring and willing are two distinct acts of the mind; and, consequently, that the will, which is but the power of volition, is much more distinct from desire."

It is surprising how little this important passage has been attended to by Locke's successors. *

Inclination is another word with which *will* is frequently

* According to Mr Belsham, "*Volition* is a modification of the passion of *desire*." (Elements, p. 227.) In another passage we are told by the same author, that "*volition* has been proved by Dr Hartley to be a case of association;" (Ibid, 175,)—a proposition which to my mind is quite incomprehensible.

confounded. Thus, when the apothecary says in *Romeo and Juliet*,

My poverty, but not my *will* consents.
Take this and drink it off; the work is done ;

the word *will* is plainly used as synonymous with inclination ; *not* in its strict logical sense, as the immediate antecedent of *action*. It is with the same latitude that the word is used in common conversation, when we speak of doing a thing which duty prescribes *against our own will* ; or when we speak of doing a thing *willingly or unwillingly*.

In some instances *pleasure* is used in the same sense with *will*, as in this sentence of Locke. " We can *at pleasure* move " several parts of our bodies ;" and in the following line of Pope *will* is used for *pleasure*.

" Go then, the guilty *at thy will* chastise."

It is very remarkable that the two words are used as synonymous by Collins, in stating the very proposition which it is the object of his tract to establish. " I contend for liberty" (says he) " as it signifies a power in man to do as he *wills* or *pleases*."

Dr Johnson on this, as on every other occasion where logical precision of ideas is called for in a definition, is strangely indistinct and inconsistent. *Will* he defines to be " that power " by which we *desire* a purpose ;" and he gives as its *synonyme* the scholastic word *velleity*. On turning to the article *velleity*, we are told that " it is the school term used to signify the " *lowest degree of desire* ;" in illustration of which Dr South is quoted, according to whom " the *wishing* of a thing is not " properly the *willing* it, but it is that which is called by the " schools an imperfect *velleity*, and imports no more than an " idle inoperative complacency in, and *desire* of the end, without any consideration of the means."

Dr Priestley's language on this subject is as loose as that of Dr Johnson. " What is *desire* but a *wish* to obtain some apprehended good ? And is not every wish a volition ?"*

* Illustrations of Phil. Necess. p. 45.

In the next page he tells us, that “ the determinations of
 “ what we call the *will* are in fact nothing more than a par-
 “ ticular case of the general doctrine of association of ideas,
 “ and, therefore, a perfectly mechanical thing.”

In another paragraph of the chapter quoted above, Locke justly objects to the terms in which the question concerning liberty and necessity is commonly stated, *whether man's will be free or no ?* This question he pronounces to be “ *unreasonable*
 “ *and unintelligible ;* inasmuch as *liberty*, which is but a *power*,
 “ belongs only to agents, and cannot be an attribute or modi-
 “ fication of the *will*, which is also but a *power*.”*

To this remark of Locke it may be added, that, instead of speaking (according to common phraseology,) of the influence of motives on the *will*, it would be much more correct to speak of the influence of motives on the *agent*. We are apt to forget what *the will* is, and to consider it as something inanimate and passive, the state of which can be altered only by the action of some external cause. The habitual use of the metaphorical word *motives*, to denote the intentions or purposes which accompany our voluntary actions, or, in other words, the *ends* which we have in view in the exercise of the power entrusted to us, has a strong tendency to confirm us in this error, by leading us to assimilate in fancy the *volition* of a mind to the *motion* of a body ; and the circumstances which give rise to this volition to the *vis motrix* by which the motion is produced.

It was probably in order to facilitate the reception of his favourite scheme of necessity that Hobbes was led to substitute, instead of the old division of our faculties into the powers of the understanding and those of the will, a new division of his own, in which the name of *cognitive* powers was given to the former, and that of *motive* powers to the latter. To familiarize the ears of superficial readers to this phraseology was of itself one great step towards securing their suffrages against the supposition of man's free agency. To say that the *will* is determined by *motive* powers, is to employ a language which virtually implies a recognition of the very point in dispute. Accordingly,

* This remark had been previously made by Hobbes.

Mr Belsham is at pains to keep the metaphorical origin of the word *motive* in the view of his readers, by prefixing to his argument, in favour of the scheme of necessity, the following definition.

“ *Motive*, in this discussion, is to be understood in its most extensive sense. It expresses whatever MOVES or influences the mind in its choice.”*

According to Mr Locke, the ideas of *liberty* and of *power* are very nearly the same. “ Every one” (he observes) “ finds in himself a power to begin or forbear, continue or put an end to several actions in himself. From the consideration of the extent of this power of the mind over the actions of the man, which every one finds in himself, arise the ideas of liberty and necessity.” And a few sentences afterwards :—“ The idea of liberty is the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any particular action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either of them is preferred to the other. Where either of them is not in the power of the agent, to be produced by him according to his volition, there he is not at liberty but under necessity.” † That these definitions are not perfectly correct will appear hereafter. They approach, indeed, very nearly to the definitions of liberty and necessity given by Hobbes, Collins, and Edwards ; whereas Locke, in order to do justice to his own decided opinion on the subject, ought to have included also in his idea of liberty, a *power* over the determinations of his will.

It is owing in a great measure to this close connection between the ideas of *free-will* and of *power*, and to the pleasure with which the consciousness of *power* is always accompanied, that we feel so painful a mortification in perusing those systems in which our free agency is called in question. Dr Priestley himself, as well as his great oracle, Dr Hartley, has acknowledged, that “ he was not a ready convert to the doctrine of necessity, and that he gave up his liberty with great reluc-

* Elem. 228.

† Locke's Works, 8vo Edit. Vol. I. 224.

“tance.”* But whence this reluctance to embrace a doctrine so “great and glorious,” but from its repugnance to the natural feelings and natural wishes of the human mind?

In addition to the foregoing considerations, the following detached hints may be of use in guarding us against some logical oversights which have misled a large proportion of the ingenious men who have engaged in this controversy.

In the case of inanimate matter, when I say that the motion produced is proportional to the impressed force, I only assert an identical proposition; for my only notion of *the quantity of a force* is from the effects it produces. In like manner, in the case of *motives*, I may, if I choose, define the *strength* of a motive by its prevailing over other motives in determining the will, and then lay it down as a proposition, that the will is determined by the strongest motive. In this case likewise it is evident that I only assert an identical proposition,—a proposition, however, extremely apt to mislead, in consequence of its applying to mind the word *strength*, which, from its ordinary and proper application to the forces that move *inert* matter, suggests a theory concerning the influence of motives which takes for granted the thing to be proved.

Let us consider what is meant, when it is said that the will is *necessarily* determined by motives. Is it to be understood that the connection is similar to that between a force impressed on a body and the subsequent motion? But of the nature of this connection I am as ignorant as of the other. In both cases I only see the fact. It is remarkable that the advocates for necessity have attempted to explain the actions of voluntary agents by the phenomena of motion, and that some other metaphysicians (in particular Kepler and Lord Monboddo) have attempted to explain the phenomena of motion by the operations of voluntary agents. In both cases philosophers saw the difficulties attending that set of phenomena to which they confined their attention, and endeavoured to explain them by the

* Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity illustrated. Preface, page xxvii. Birmingham, 1732.

analogy of another class of facts not so immediately under their consideration at the moment, without recollecting that both the one and the other are equally placed beyond our comprehension.

Although, however, the connection between an impressed force and the subsequent motion be as inexplicable as the connection between the motive and the subsequent action, I would not be understood to insinuate that the two cases are at all parallel. In the case of motion, although I cannot trace the necessary connection between it and the impressed force, I am certain that the motion is the effect of *some cause* with which it is necessarily connected ; for every change that takes place in an inanimate object suggests to me the notion of a cause. But in the case of the determinations of a voluntary agent, *he* is himself the author of them ; nor could any thing have led philosophers to look out for any other causes of them, but an apprehended analogy between volition in a mind and motion in a body.

The argument for necessity derives all its force from the maxim, “ that every change requires a cause.” * But this maxim, although true with respect to inanimate matter, does not apply to intelligent agents, which cannot be conceived without the power of self-determination. Upon an accurate analysis, indeed, of the meaning of words, it will be found that the idea of an *efficient cause* implies the idea of *mind*, and consequently, that it is absurd to ascribe the volitions of *mind* to the efficiency of causes foreign to itself. It is curious that Mr Hume, who has in one part of his system denied the certainty of the maxim just now mentioned, has, in another part of it, adopted the scheme of necessity, although that scheme derives all its plausibility from an undue and unwarrantable extension of this very maxim.†

* This maxim is generally stated in too unqualified a form. “ In the idea “ of every *change*,” (says Dr Price,) “ is included that of its being an *effect*.” (Review, &c. p. 30. 3d edit. Lond. 1827.) He should have said *every change in inanimate matter*. That he himself understood it under this limitation is evident, from the zeal with which he always combats the scheme of necessity.

† From these observations it seems to me to follow, that, whatever may be

Before quitting this part of the subject, there remains to be considered another argument for the necessary connection between motives and actions, which has been lately proposed by

the nature of the relation between a motive and an action, there is no reason for concluding it to be at all analogous to that between a cause and its effect. In farther proof of this some authors have remarked, that the latter connection is always constant and uniform, whereas we know that the same motive may at different times lead to very different actions.—(See the very ingenious Essays, Philosophical and Literary, of the late learned and excellent Dr James Gregory.) —But this answer is not satisfactory ; and as it places the point in dispute on an improper ground, it may be useful to show in what its fallacy consists. By giving up an argument which will not bear examination we strengthen a good cause, no less than by producing additional evidence in its support.

In considering the connection between cause and effect, there are three things to be attended to ; the cause, the subject on which it operates, and the effect. While the cause and the subject continue the same, we expect the same effect with the utmost confidence ; but if either the cause or the subject vary we expect that the effect will be different. When we speak of the constant conjunction between cause and effect in physics, we always take for granted that the cause operates in the same circumstances. A variety of cases might be mentioned in which we see the operation of the same cause, but are unable to predict with certainty what the effect will be, in consequence of our ignorance concerning *the state of the subject*. This is the case with respect to the medicines which we apply to the human body. Now, the fact may be supposed to be somewhat analogous with respect to the mind. It always indeed retains a consciousness of its *personal identity* ; but notwithstanding this circumstance it is constantly undergoing very important alterations,—insomuch that the character may be changed in a considerable degree by the acquisition of new information, or the acquisition of new habits, (both of which it may derive from external circumstances in a way altogether independent of its choice.) Indeed it may be doubted whether the mind can be considered as exactly the same subject in any two instants of its existence. We are not therefore entitled to conclude that the relation between motive and action is different from the relation between cause and effect in physics, *merely from the want of constant conjunction*, unless it could be shown that the same motive was followed by different actions *when operating upon the same precise subject*. Nor is this all. The same verbal proposition, when stated at different times to the same individual, cannot be considered as the same motive, unless it is always apprehended in the same light by the *understanding*, the conclusions of which plainly do not depend on our choice. Allowing, therefore, that the relation between motive and action were the same with the relation between cause and effect, it might happen that no constant conjunction between them should be observable, in consequence either of some alteration in the state of the intellectual powers, or of the active principles.

Dr Priestley, and on which that very ingenious writer seems to lay considerable stress.

This argument proceeds on the supposition that man is wholly a *material* being, and that the power of thinking is the result of a certain organization of the brain. But, if man be wholly material, does it not follow that all his functions must be regulated by the laws of mechanism, and that, of consequence, all his actions proceed from an irresistible necessity? According to this argument, therefore, the doctrine of necessity is an obvious corollary from that of materialism.

As this reasoning takes the scheme of materialism for granted, it is they alone who have adopted that scheme who are interested in examining whether the reasoning be conclusive or not. The only question, therefore, before us at present is, whether the author's conclusion be a logical consequence of his premises. That it is *not* a consequence of his premises, but a mere play on words, will appear obvious from the following consideration.

That matter is incapable of acting, excepting in so far as it is acted upon, is a principle universally admitted by the soundest philosophers, and perfectly agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind. But this principle is founded on the supposition, that matter is inert and insentient, incapable of thought, or of changing its state either of rest or of motion till it is acted on by some foreign power. If we reject this supposition, as Dr Priestley has done, and consider matter as consisting of certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and requiring nothing but a particular arrangement or organization to exhibit the phenomena of sensation and of thought, we are certainly not entitled to apply any inference from our common notions concerning matter to the functions of a being, organized as Dr Priestley supposes man to be. If our ideas of matter imply nothing more than certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and if matter properly organized may produce a being capable of sensation and of thought, why may not the same organization produce a being capable of acting from his own free-will, and without the necessary influence of any motive imposed on him

from without? In this instance, therefore, Dr Priestley's zeal for a favourite opinion has betrayed him into a sophism very unworthy of his abilities, and which derives the very slight plausibility it possesses entirely from an ambiguity in the meaning of the word *matter*, occasioned by his own peculiar speculations on its nature and properties.

It is amusing enough that this very argument of Dr Priestley's, or at least one extremely similar to it, was long ago proposed *ironically* by Dr Berkeley, in his ingenious dialogues, entitled the *Minute Philosopher*,—a book which, (notwithstanding a few paradoxical passages connected with the author's system of idealism,) may be safely recommended as one of the most instructive, as well as entertaining works, of which English philosophy has to boast. “ Corporeal objects strike on the organs of sense, whence ensues a vibration in the nerves, which being communicated to the soul or animal spirit in the brain or root of the nerves, produceth therein that motion called volition; and this produceth a new determination on the spirits, causing them to flow in such nerves as must necessarily, by the laws of mechanism, produce such certain actions. This being the case, it follows that those things which vulgarly pass for human actions are to be esteemed mechanical, and that they are falsely ascribed to a free principle. There is therefore no foundation for praise or blame, fear or hope, reward or punishment, nor consequently for religion, which is built upon and supposeth those things.”* The alteration which Dr Priestley has made on this argument is certainly far from an improvement; for his peculiar notions concerning the nature of matter render it much more inconsequential than it must appear to those who retain the common opinions on that subject.

SECTION II.

Statement of the common Argument for Necessity.

Before proceeding to an examination of this question I shall

* Dialogue vii. xix.

premise a few principles in which both parties are agreed, or which at least appear *to me* to be concessions, which the advocates for free-will may safely make to their antagonists without any injury to their general argument.

1. Every action is performed with some view, or, in other words, is performed from some motive. Dr Reid indeed denies this with zeal, but I am doubtful if he has strengthened his cause by doing so ; * for he confesses that the actions which are performed without motives are perfectly trifling and insignificant, and not such as lead to any general conclusion concerning the merit or demerit of moral agents. I should therefore rather be disposed to yield this point than to dispute a proposition not materially connected with the question at issue. One thing is clear and indisputable, that it is only in so far as a man acts from motives or intentions, that he is entitled to the character of a rational being.

2. The merit of an action depends entirely on the motive from which it was performed. Dr Reid remarks, that some necessitarians have triumphed in this principle as the very hinge of the controversy, whereas the truth is, that no reasonable advocate for free-will ever called it in question.

So far, I think, we are justified in going. The great question is, *How* do these motives determine the will ? In answer to this question the Necessitarians reason as follows :—

Every change in nature, we are told, implies the operation of a *cause* ; and this maxim, it is pretended, holds not only with respect to inanimate matter, but with respect to the changes which take place in the state of a mind. Every volition, therefore, must have been produced by a motive with which it is as necessarily connected as any other effect with its cause ; and when different motives are presented to the mind at the same time, the will yields to the strongest, as necessarily as a body urged by two contrary forces moves in the direction of that which is most powerful.

The foregoing argument goes to prove, that all human actions are as necessarily produced by motives as the going of a

* Essays on the Active Powers, pp. 293, 294.

clock is necessarily produced by the weights, and that no human action could have been otherwise than it really was. Nay, it applies also in full force to the Deity, and indeed to all intelligent beings whatever ; for it is not founded on anything peculiar to the *human* mind, but on the *impossibility of free agency* ; and, of consequence, it leads to this general conclusion, that no *event* in the universe could have happened otherwise than it did.

When the scheme of necessity is pushed to this length, it involves the supposition, “ that every created being, and every “ event, even the most trifling, has an existence as necessary “ as that of the Deity ;” a supposition which forms one of the fundamental principles of the system of Spinoza. On this subject, I confess, it appears to me that Spinoza reasons well, and that, if we admit his principles, we cannot deny his conclusion. The conclusion, at the same time, is such as every unprejudiced understanding must revolt at the instant it is mentioned, and which may serve as a demonstration, in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, of the erroneousness of the principle from which it is deduced. “ It does not indeed appear possible” (as Mr Maclaurin has observed) “ to invent another system equally absurd, amounting (as it does in fact) to this proposition, that “ there is but one substance in the universe endowed with infinite attributes (particularly infinite extension and cognition,) which produces all other things necessarily as its own modifications, and which alone is, in all events, both physical and moral, at once cause and effect, agent and patient.” * Accordingly, Dr Clarke has been at much pains to prove, that the Deity *must be a free agent*, and, therefore, that free agency is not impossible ; from which he infers, that there must be some flaw in the reasonings just stated to prove that man is a necessary agent. If this reasoning of Clarke’s be admitted as conclusive, where is the absurdity (I would ask) of supposing, that God may have been pleased to place man in a state of moral discipline, by imparting to him a freedom of choice between good and evil, in like manner as he has imparted to him various other faculties and powers essentially different from any-

* View of Newton’s Discoveries, Book i. chap. iv.

thing we observe in the lower animals? Is not the contrary assertion a presumptuous attempt to set limits to the Divine Omnipotence?

Among the various forms which religious enthusiasm assumes, there is a certain prostration of the mind, which, under the specious disguise of a deep humility, aims at exalting the Divine perfections by annihilating all the powers which belong to human nature. “Nothing is more usual for fervent devotion” (says Sir James Mackintosh, in speaking of some theories current among the Hindoos) “than to dwell so long and so warmly on the meanness and worthlessness of created things, and on the all-sufficiency of the Supreme Being, that it slides insensibly from comparative to absolute language, and in the eagerness of its zeal to magnify the Deity, seems to annihilate everything else.” *

This excellent observation may serve to account for the zeal displayed by many devout men in favour of the scheme of necessity. “We have nothing (they frequently and justly remind us) but what we have received.” But the question here is simply a matter of fact, whether we have or have not received from God the gift of free-will; and the only argument, it must be remembered, which they have yet been able to advance for the negative proposition, is, that this gift was impossible even for the power of God; an argument, we may remark, which not only annihilates the power of man, but annihilates that of God also, and subjects him, as well as all his creatures, to the control of causes which he is unable to resist. So completely does this scheme defeat the pious views in which it has sometimes originated. I say *sometimes*, for this very argument against the liberty of the will is employed by Spinoza; according to whom the free agency of man involves the absurd supposition of an *imperium in imperio* in the universe. † Voltaire, too, who in his latter days, abandoning those principles for which he had before, when in the full vigour of his faculties, so zealously and eloquently contended, seems to have

* See Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. II. p. 529. Second Edit.

† Tractat. Polit. cap. ii. sect. 6.

become a convert to the scheme of fatalism, has on one occasion had recourse to an argument against man's free-agency, similar in substance to what is advanced by Spinoza in the passage now referred to. "En effet, il seroit bien *singulier* que toute la nature, tous les astres obeissent à des loix éternelles, et qu'il y eut un petit animal haut de cinq pieds, qui en mepris de ces lois pût agir toujours comme il lui plairoit au seul gré de son caprice."*—"Singular!" (exclaims Dr Beattie after quoting the preceding sentence,) "Aye, singular indeed—but not a whit more singular than that this same animal of five feet should perceive, and think, and read, and write, and speak; attributes which no astronomer of my acquaintance has ever supposed to belong to the planets, notwithstanding their brilliant appearance and stupendous magnitude."† The reply is quite as good as the argument is entitled to.

SECTION III.

View of the question given by Hobbes.

According to the view of the subject that has now been taken, we are led to conclude, that man possesses a power over the determinations of his will:—and this is precisely the scheme of what is commonly called *free-will*, in opposition to that of *necessity*.

But this power over the determinations of the will has been represented by some philosophers as an absurdity and impossibility. "Liberty" (we are told) "consists only in a power to act as we will; and it is impossible to conceive in any being a greater liberty than this. Hence it follows, that liberty does not extend to the determinations of the will, but only to the actions consequent upon its determinations. To say that we have power to will such an action, is to say, that we may will it if we will. This supposes the will to be determined by a

* Le Philosophe Ignorant, XIII.

† Essay on Truth, p. 360, second Ed.

“ prior will ; and for the same reason that will must be determined by a will prior to it, and so on in an infinite series of wills, which is absurd. To act freely, therefore, can mean nothing more than to act voluntarily ; and this is all the liberty that can be conceived in man or in any other being.”

Agreeably to this reasoning Hobbes defines a free-agent to be “ he that can do if he will, and forbear if he will.”* The same definition has been adopted by Leibnitz †, by Collins, by Gravesande, by Edwards, by Bonnet, and by all later necessitarians. It cannot be better expressed than in the words of Gravesande : “ *Facultas faciendi quod libuerit, quæcunque fuerit voluntatis determinatio.*” ‡

Dr Priestley ascribes this peculiar notion of free-will to Hobbes as its author ; § but it is in fact of much older date even among modern metaphysicians ; coinciding exactly with the doctrine of those scholastic divines who contended for the *Liberty of Spontaneity*, in opposition to the liberty of *indifference*. It is, however, to Hobbes that the partizans of this opinion are indebted for the happiest and most popular illustration of it that has yet been given. “ I conceive” (says he) “ liberty to be rightly defined, *the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsic quality of the agent.* As, for example, the water “ is said to descend *freely*, or to have *liberty* to descend by “ the channel of the river, because there is no impediment “ that way ; but not across, because the banks are impediments. And though water cannot ascend, yet men never

* Hobbes's Works, p. 484. Folio Edit.

† Leibnitz has almost literally translated the words of Hobbes. “ *Proprie loquendo volumus agere ; non vero volumus velle ; alioqui dicere etiam possemus, velle nos habere voluntatem volendi, quod in infinitum abiret.*” Leib. Op. T. I. p. 156.

‡ Introd. ad Philosoph. sect. 115.

§ “ The doctrine of philosophical necessity” (says Priestley) “ is in reality “ a modern thing ; not older, I believe, than Mr Hobbes. Of the Calvinists, I “ believe Mr Jonathan Edwards to be the first.” (Illustrations of Philos. Necess. p. 195.)

Supposing this statement to be correct, does not the very modern date of Hobbes's *alleged* discovery furnish a very strong presumption against it ?

“ say it wants the *liberty* to ascend, but the faculty or *power*,
 “ because the impediment is in the nature of the water, and
 “ intrinsic. So also we say, he that is tied wants the *liberty*
 “ to go, because the impediment is not in him, but in his
 “ bands ; whereas we say not so of him who is sick or lame,
 “ because the impediment is in himself.”*

According to Bonnet, “ moral liberty is the power of the
 “ mind, to obey without constraint the impulse of the motives
 “ which act upon it.” This definition, which is obviously the
 same in substance with that of Hobbes, is thus very justly, as
 well as acutely, animadverted on by Cuvier. “ N’admettant
 “ aucune action sans motif, comme dit-il il n’y a aucun effet
 “ sans cause, Bonnet définit la *Liberté Morale*, le pouvoir de
 “ l’ame de suivre sans contrainte les motifs dont elle éprouve
 “ l’impulsion ; il resout ainsi les objections que l’on tire de la
 “ prévision de Dieu ; mais peut-être aussi détourne-t-il l’idée
 “ qu’on se fait d’ordinaire de la liberté. Malgré ces opinions,
 “ qui touchent au matérialisme et au fatalisme, Bonnet fut très
 “ religieux.” †

From this passage it appears, that the very ingenious writer
 was as completely aware as Clarke or Reid, of the unsound-
 ness of the definition of *moral liberty* given by Hobbes and
 his followers ; and that the ultimate tendency of the doctrine
 which limits the free-agency of man to (what has been called)
 the *liberty of spontaneity*, was the same, though in a more dis-
 guised form, with that of fatalism. On points of this sort, I
 have always a peculiar satisfaction, when I am able to fortify
 my own conclusions by the opinions of writers educated un-
 der other forms of government, and other systems of religion.
 I need not say how much this satisfaction is increased when
 the writers with whom I have the good fortune to agree rank
 as high as Cuvier in the philosophical world.

In order to judge how far the reasoning of Hobbes is in this
 instance satisfactory, it is necessary to attend to the various
 significations of the word *liberty* ; for the sense in which Hobbes

* Treatise of Liberty and Necessity.

† Biographie Universelle, à Paris, 1812. Article Bonnet.

has defined it is only one of its acceptations, and by no means the sense in which it ought to be employed in this controversy.*

1. Liberty is opposed to confinement of the body by superior force, as when a person is shut up in a prison. It is in this sense that *Hobbes* uses the word ; for he tells us that liberty consists only in a power to act as we will. And if the word had no other acceptation, the objection now stated would be a valid one ; for as the will cannot be confined by any external force, neither can we with propriety ascribe to the will that species of liberty which is opposed to such confinement.

2. Liberty is opposed to the restraints on human conduct arising from law and government ; as when we say, that, by entering into a political society, a man gives up part of his natural liberty. In this sense liberty undoubtedly extends to the determinations of the will ; and the very obligations which are opposed to it proceed on the supposition that the will is free. The establishment of law does not abridge this freedom, but, on the contrary, it takes for granted that we have it in our power to obey or to transgress ; proposing to us on the one hand, the motives of duty and of interest ; and setting before us, on the other, the consequences of wilful transgression.

3. Liberty is opposed to necessity ; and it is in this sense the word is employed, when we say that man is a free and accountable being, and that the connection between motives and actions is not a necessary connection, like that between cause and effect. This species of liberty has been called by some *moral liberty*.

That there is nothing inconceivable in this idea, appears, I hope, sufficiently from what has been already said. And indeed it is so far from being a metaphysical refinement or subtlety, that the common sense of mankind pronounces men to be accountable for their conduct, only in so far as they are understood to be morally free. Whence is it that we consider the pain of the rack as an alleviation of the falsehoods extorted from the criminal ? Plainly because the motives presented to

* Reid on the Active Powers, pp. 272, 27 . Quarto Ed.

him are supposed to be such as no ordinary degree of self-command is able to resist. And if we were only satisfied that these motives were *perfectly* irresistible, we would not ascribe to him any guilt at all.

As an additional confirmation of Hobbes's doctrine, it has been urged that human laws require no more to constitute a crime but that it be *voluntary*; and hence it has been inferred, that the criminality consists in the determination of the will, whether that determination be free or necessary.

The case just referred to affords a sufficient refutation of this argument. The confession of the criminal is surely *voluntary* in the strict acceptation of that term; and yet we consider his guilt as alleviated, in the same proportion in which we suppose his moral liberty to be abridged.

It is true that in most cases human laws require no more to constitute a crime but that it be voluntary; because in general motives are placed beyond the cognizance of earthly tribunals. But, in a moral view, merit and demerit suppose not only actions to be voluntary, but the agent to be possessed of moral liberty. And even earthly tribunals judge on the same principle, wherever it can be made appear that the person accused was deprived of the power of self-government by insanity, or by some accidental paroxysm of passion.

I shall only mention one other argument in favour of the scheme of necessity; and I have reserved for it the last place, as it has been proposed with all the confidence of mathematical demonstration by a writer of no less note than Mr Belsham. It is in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*; and its more immediate object is to expose to ridicule the consequences which necessarily flow from the doctrine of free-will.

The argument is this,—“According to the hypothesis of “free-will, the essence of virtue and vice consists in liberty; “for example, benevolence without liberty is no virtue: malignity without liberty is no vice. Both are equally in a “neutral state. Add a portion of liberty to both, benevolence “instantly becomes an eminent virtue, and malignity an odious vice. That is, IF TO EQUALS YOU ADD EQUALS, THE

“ WHOLEs WILL BE UNEQUAL ; than which nothing can be
 “ more absurd.” *

On this reasoning, to which it would be unjust to deny the merit of complete originality, I have no comment to offer. I have quoted it chiefly as a specimen of the logical and mathematical skill of the present advocates for the doctrine of philosophical necessity. In this point of view, it forms an amusing contrast to the lofty pretensions of a sect, which prides itself not only on its superiority to vulgar prejudices, but on its sagacity in detecting a fraud so successfully practised on the rest of mankind, by the author of their moral constitution.

If the foregoing remarks be well founded, the only two opinions which, in the actual state of metaphysical science, ought to be stated in contrast, are that of liberty (or free will) on the one side, and that of necessity on the other. As to the liberty of spontaneity, (which expresses a fact altogether foreign to the point in question,) I can conceive no motive for inventing such a phrase, but a desire in some writers to veil the scheme of necessity from their readers, under a language less revolting to the sentiments of mankind ; and in others an anxiety to banish it as far as possible from their own thoughts, by substituting, instead of the terms in which it is commonly expressed, a circumlocution which seems, on a superficial view, to concede something to the advocates for liberty.

The phrase *liberty of indifference*, which has been so frequently substituted, (particularly since the time of Leibnitz,) for the older, simpler, and much more intelligible phrase of free-will, is, in my opinion, not less objectionable than the *liberty of spontaneity*. † It certainly conveys but a very inadequate notion of the thing meant ;—the power, to wit, of *choice* or *election* ; and *that* not only among things indifferent, but (*a fortiori*) between right and wrong, good and evil.

* Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, by Thomas Belsham, pp. 258, 259.

† Both phrases are favourite expressions with Lord Kames in his discussions on this subject. See in particular the Appendix to his *Essay on Liberty and Necessity*, in the last edition of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*.

The distinction between *physical* and *moral* necessity I conceive to be not less frivolous than those to which the foregoing animadversions relate. On this point I agree with Diderot's assertion, in a passage to be quoted afterwards, that the word *necessity* (as it ought to be understood in this dispute) admits but of *one* interpretation.

SECTION IV.

Argument for Necessity, proposed by Leibnitz.

It is well known to all who have any acquaintance with the history of modern philosophy, that one of the fundamental principles of the Leibnitzian system is, "that nothing exists without a *sufficient reason* why it should be so, and not otherwise." Of this principle the following succinct account is given by Leibnitz himself in his controversial correspondence with Dr Clarke:—"The great foundation of mathematics is the principle of contradiction or identity; that is, that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time. But in order to proceed from mathematics to natural philosophy, another principle is requisite, (as I have observed in my Theodicæa), I mean the principle of the *sufficient reason*; or, in other words, that nothing happens without a *reason* why it should be so rather than otherwise. And accordingly, Archimedes was obliged, in his book *De Æquilibrio*, to take for granted, that, if there be a balance in which every thing is alike on both sides, and if equal weights are hung on the two ends of that balance, the whole will be at rest. It is because no *reason* can be given why one side should weigh down rather than the other. Now by this single principle of the *sufficient reason* may be demonstrated the Being of a God, and all the other parts of metaphysics or natural theology; and even in some measure those physical truths that are independent upon mathematics, such as the dynamical principles, or the principles of force."

Some of the inferences deduced by Leibnitz from this

almost gratuitous assumption are so paradoxical, that one cannot help wondering he was not staggered about its certainty. Not only was he led to conclude that the mind is necessarily determined in all its elections by the greatest apparent good, insomuch that it would be impossible for it to make a choice between two things perfectly alike; but he had the boldness to extend this conclusion to the Deity, and to assert, that two things perfectly alike could not have been produced even by Divine Power. It was upon this ground that he rejected a *vacuum*, because all the parts of it would be perfectly like to each other; and that he also rejected the supposition of *atoms*, or similar particles of matter, and ascribed to each particle a *monad*, or active principle, by which it is discriminated from every other particle. The application of his principle, however, on which he evidently valued himself the most, was that to which I have already alluded,—the demonstrative evidence with which he conceived it to establish the impossibility of free-agency, not only in man, but in any other intelligent being; * a conclusion which, under whatever form of words it

* The following comment on this part of the Leibnitzian system is from the pen of one of his greatest admirers, Charles Bonnet :—“ Cette métaphysique “ transcendante deviendra un peu plus intelligible, si l’on fait attention, qu’en “ vertu du principe de la *raison suffisante*, tout est nécessairement lié dans l’uni- “ vers. Toutes les actions des êtres simples sont harmoniques, ou subordonnées “ les unes aux autres. L’exercice actuel de l’activité d’une monade donnée, est “ déterminé par l’exercice actuel de l’activité des monades auxquelles elle corre- “ sponde immédiatement. Cette correspondance continue d’un point quelconque “ de l’univers jusqu’à ses extrémités. Représentez vous les ondes circulaires “ et concentriques qu’une pierre excite dans une eau dormante. Elles vont tou- “ jours en s’élargissant et en s’affaiblissant.

“ Mais, l’état actuel d’une monade est nécessairement déterminé par son état “ antécédent; celui-ci par un état qui précède, ainsi en remontant jusqu’à “ l’instant de la création.

* * * *

“ Ainsi le passé, le présent, et le futur ne forment dans la même monade “ qu’une seule chaîne. Notre philosophe disoit ingénieusement, que *le présent* “ est toujours gros de l’avenir.

“ Il disoit encore que l’Eternel Géomètre resolvoit sans cesse ce problème; “ l’état d’une monade étant donné, en déterminer l’état passé, présent, et futur “ de tout l’univers.”—Bonnet, Tome VIII. pp. 303, 304, 305.

may be disguised, is liable to every objection which can be urged against the system of Spinoza.

With respect to the principle from which these important consequences were deduced, it is observable that it is stated by Leibnitz in terms so general and vague as to extend to all the different departments of our knowledge ; for he tells us that there must be a sufficient *reason* for every *existence*, for every *event*, and for every *truth*. This use of the word *reason* is so extremely equivocal, that it is quite impossible to annex any precise idea to the proposition. Of this it is unnecessary to produce any other proof than the application which is here made of it to things so very different as *existences*, *events*, and *truths* ; in all of which cases it must of necessity have different meanings. It would be a vain attempt, therefore, to combat the maxim in the form in which it is generally appealed to. Nor indeed can we either adopt or reject it, without considering particularly how far it holds in the various instances to which it may be applied.

The multifarious discussions, however, of a physical,* a metaphysical, and a theological nature, necessarily involved in so detailed an examination, would, in the present times, (even if this were a proper place for introducing them) be equally useless and uninteresting. The peculiar opinions of Leibnitz on most questions connected with these sciences have already fallen into complete neglect. But as the maxim still continues to be quoted by the latest advocates for the scheme of necessity, it may not be altogether superfluous to observe, that, when understood to refer to the changes which take place in the *mate-*

* One of the happiest applications of this principle in physics that I know of, is in D'Alembert's Demonstration of the Composition of forces, where the only axiom which he assumes is this,—that, “ if a body be acted upon by three equal “ forces, in directions forming equal angles with each other, it will necessarily “ remain at rest, there existing no *sufficient reason* why it should move in one “ direction rather than another.” The same principle, too, is assumed in the ingenious reasoning employed by Stevinus, to prove “ that a chain laid on an “ inclined plane, with a part of it hanging over at top in a perpendicular line, “ will be in *equilibrio*, if the two ends of the chain reach down exactly to the “ same level.”—See Mr Playfair's Dissertation in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Part i. pp. 64, 65.

rial universe, it coincides entirely with the common maxim, that “ every change implies the operation of a *cause* ;” and that it is in consequence of its intuitive evidence in this particular case, that so many have been led to acquiesce in it in the unlimited terms in which Leibnitz has announced it. One thing will be readily granted, that the maxim, when applied to the determinations of intelligent and moral *agents*, is not *quite* so obvious and indisputable as when applied to the changes that take place in things altogether inanimate and passive.

What, then, it may be asked, induced Leibnitz, in the enunciation of his maxim, to depart from the form in which it has generally been stated, and to substitute, instead of the word *cause* the word *reason*, which is certainly not only the more unusual, but the more ambiguous expression of the two? Was it not evidently a perception of the impropriety of calling the motives from which we act the *causes* of our actions; or at least of the inconsistency of this language with the common ideas and feelings of mankind? The word *reason* is *here* much less suspicious, and much more likely to pass current without examination. It was therefore with no small dexterity that Leibnitz contrived to express his general principle in such a manner, that the impropriety of his language should be most apparent in that case in which the proposition is instantaneously admitted by every reader as self-evident; and to adapt it, in its most precise and definite shape, to the case in which it was in the greatest danger of undergoing a severe scrutiny. In this respect he has managed his argument with more address than Collins, or Edwards, or Hume, all of whom have applied the maxim to *mind*, in the very same words in which it is usually applied to inanimate matter.

Let us examine, therefore, Leibnitz’s principle as applicable to the determinations of the will, and consider what it implies, and how far it is agreeable to fact. And for this purpose it is necessary to attend to the various senses in which it may be understood; for although it is in this case that the author’s expressions are the least exceptionable, they are yet far from being limited to one interpretation.

1. When it is said, that for every voluntary action there must have been a sufficient reason, the proposition may be understood merely to imply that every such action must have had a *cause*. And we may remark by the way, that this is the only interpretation of which the proposition admits, if the word reason be used in the same sense in which alone Leibnitz's maxim is applicable to inanimate matter. But in this sense of the proposition it does not at all affect the question about liberty and necessity ; for it only implies that the action is an effect, which either proceeded from the free will of the agent (in which case he may justly be said to be the cause of the effect,) or which did not proceed from his free-will (in which case it must ultimately be referred to some other cause.)

2. The principle of the *sufficient reason*, when applied to our voluntary actions, may be understood to imply, that the will is necessarily determined by the greatest apparent good. As this proposition is not peculiar to the system of Leibnitz, it may be proper to state it more fully.

The circumstances of our external situation, (it has been said,) and the state of our appetites, desires, &c. at any particular time, evidently do not depend on us. Suppose, then, that I am under the influence of any two active principles which urge me in different directions, and that I deliberate which of them I am to obey : The conclusion my understanding forms on this subject does not depend on me, and this conclusion necessarily determines my will ; for it is impossible for a man not to do what appears to him to be, on the whole, the best and most eligible thing at the moment. My will, therefore, in every case, depends as little on myself as the conclusion of my understanding when I give my assent to a mathematical demonstration.

The flaw of this reasoning, I apprehend, lies in that step in which it is affirmed, that the will is necessarily determined by what appears to us to be *best* and most *eligible* at the moment ;—and the only circumstance which gives the proposition the smallest degree of plausibility is the ambiguity of the language in which it is stated. For it may either imply that

our volitions are necessarily agreeable to what we *will* at the time ; in which case we only assert an identical proposition : Or that the will is necessarily determined by what appears to us to be *morally* best and really most *eligible* at the time ; in which case we assert what is contrary to fact.

3. The meaning of the proposition now under consideration may be understood to be this, that for every action there must be a motive.

I have already said that in this sense I am disposed to admit the maxim. Dr Reid indeed has very confidently maintained the negative ; but I do not think, (as I formerly observed,) that by doing so he has strengthened his cause ; for he confesses that the actions which are performed without motives are perfectly trifling and insignificant : Nay, he acknowledges that the merit of an action depends entirely on the motive from which it was performed.

But although we grant this general proposition, it certainly does not follow from it that man is a necessary agent. The question is not concerning the *influence* of motives, but concerning the *nature* of that influence. The advocates for necessity represent it as the influence of a cause in producing its effect. The advocates for liberty acknowledge that the motive is the *occasion* of acting, or the *reason* for acting ; but contend that it is so far from being the efficient cause of it that it supposes the efficiency to exist elsewhere, viz. in the mind of the agent. Between these two opinions there is an essential distinction. The one represents man merely as a passive instrument. According to the other, he is really an *agent*, and the sole author of his own actions. He acts indeed from motives, but he has the power of choice among different ones. When he acts from a particular motive, it is not because this motive is *stronger* than others, but because he *willed* to act in this way. Indeed it may be questioned if the word *strength* conveys any idea when applied to motives. It is obviously an analogical or metaphorical expression, borrowed from a class of phenomena essentially different.

“ Nothing” (says Dr Clarke) “ is without a sufficient reason why it *is* rather than *not*, and why it is *thus* rather than *otherwise*. But in things in their own nature indifferent, mere *will*, without any thing external to influence it, is alone a sufficient reason, as in the instance of God’s creating or placing a particle of matter in one place rather than another, when all places are originally alike.”

With this observation of Clarke’s, the following passages from Boscovich coincide. They are taken from his notes on the Latin Poem of *Benedictus Stay, de systemate Mundi*.

“ Eodem pacto sine ulla etiam ratione quam nos excogitare possimus, ex omnino similibus potuit Deus seligere potius aliqua quam alia, et ex iis quæ selegit alia alibi collocare, ut ex prorsus similibus materiæ punctis, aliud in sole, aliud in Syrio, quorum similium bina etiam haberi in mundo nequaquam Leibnitiani affirmant, quia discerni a se invicem non possunt, nec haberi posset ratio sufficiens, cur primum secundum loco collocatum non esset, et vice versa. Discernere poterit Deus ipse etiam prorsus similia, si illam intimam cujusque naturam, quam *individuationem* dicimus, videat per quam hoc non est illud. Eam autem ipsam sine ulla dissimilitudine Divinæ sapientiæ oculos effugere, quis affirmet? Porro ratio cur hæc potius hic quam alibi collocata sit, physica erit semper aliqua nimirum ipsa actio Divina qua collocatur. Moralis nulla erit *cur potius*, sed libertas, et ipsa voluntas Divina stabit pro ratione. Sic etiam, ubi nos aliquid eligimus, electionis physica ratio erit ipsa voluntas nostra volitionem producens, moralis erit semper aliqua, cum voluntas in incognitum non feratur, nec sine motivo operetur, sed non erit ratio, cur potius eligat quam non eligat, verum motivis omnibus, sive moralibus rationibus consideratis, supererit facultas, eo se inclinandi, ubi etiam minus ponderis rationes habent; ut accuratissime verum sit illud: *Video meliora* (et eodem etiam pacto *jucundiora, utiliora*) *proboque; deteriora sequor.*”

The point on which this celebrated controversy between Leibnitz and Clarke turns is very clearly and precisely defined

by Maclaurin in his account of Newton's Discoveries. "Leibnitz," he observes, "makes great use of a comparison between the effects of opposite motives on the mind, and of weights placed in the scales of a balance, or of powers acting upon the same body with contrary directions. His learned antagonist denies that there is a similitude between a balance moved by weights and a mind acting upon the view of certain motives; because the one is entirely passive, and the other not only is acted upon, but acts also. The mind, he owns, is purely passive in receiving the impressions of the motive, which is only a perception, and is not to be confounded with the power of acting after or in consequence of that perception. The difference between a man and a machine does not consist only in sensation and intelligence, but in his power of acting also. The balance, for want of this power, cannot move at all when the weights are equal; but a free agent, (says he,) when there appear two perfectly alike reasonable ways of acting, has still within itself a power of choosing; and it may have strong and very good reasons not to forbear the exercise of this power, although there may be no *reason* whatever to determine the choice in favour of one rather than of the other. It is evident that, as it is from internal consciousness I know any thing of liberty, so no assertion contrary to what I am conscious of concerning it can be admitted; and it were better perhaps to treat of this abstruse subject after the manner of experimental philosophy, than to fill a thousand pages with metaphysical discussions concerning it."—"Let any man reflect on his own thoughts, from which alone any notions we have of liberty can be derived; and if he is satisfied that he could choose between two desirable things that appear equally good, rather than want both, Leibnitz's argument (drawn from the principle of the *sufficient reason*) can have no force upon him." *

* Maclaurin, Book II. Vol. II. chapter 4.

SECTION V.

*Defence of the Scheme of Necessity by Collins and Edwards.—
Contrast between their Views and those of later Necessitarians.*

I have already said, that, in the opinion of Clarke, the scheme of Necessity, when pushed to its logical consequences, must ultimately terminate in Spinozism. It seems to have been the great aim of Collins to vindicate his favourite scheme from this reproach, and to retaliate upon the partizans of free-will the charges of favouring atheism and immorality. In proof of this, I have only to quote the account given by the author himself of the plan of his work.

“ Too much care cannot be taken to prevent being misunderstood and prejudged in handling questions of such nice speculation as those of liberty and necessity ; and, therefore, though I might in justice expect to be read before any judgment be passed on me, I think it proper to premise the following observations :—

“ *First*, though I deny *liberty* in a certain meaning of that word, yet I contend for *liberty*, as it signifies a power in man to do as he wills or pleases.

“ *Secondly*, when I affirm *necessity*, I contend only for *moral necessity*, meaning thereby that man, who is an intelligent and sensible being, is determined by his reason and his senses ; and I deny man to be subject to such necessity, as in clocks, watches, and such other beings, which, for want of sensation and intelligence, are subject to an absolute, physical, or mechanical necessity.

“ *Thirdly*, I have undertaken to show, that the notions I advance are so far from being inconsistent with, that they are the sole foundations of morality and laws, and of rewards and punishments in society ; and that the notions I explode are subversive of them.” *

* Whoever has looked into the writings of Priestley and his followers must be instantly sensible how very different their spirit is from that of the above

In the prosecution of his argument on this question, Collins endeavours to show that "Man is a necessary agent. 1. From "our experience. (By *experience* he means our own consci- "ousness that we *are* necessary agents.) 2. From the impos- "sibility of liberty. 3. From the consideration of the Divine "prescience. 4. From the nature and use of rewards and "punishments. And, 5. From the nature of morality." *

quotation ; and yet they uniformly appeal to Collins and Edwards as their great oracles upon this question. Nor is this change in the Necessitarian creed at all wonderful ; for it must be owned that the objections urged by Collins and Edwards to the doctrine of free-will are of an incomparably more imposing and popular nature, than the very subtle and shadowy arguments by which they have tried to reconcile their scheme with man's moral agency ; and, accordingly, I will venture to say, that, among the proselytes they have gained to the first part of their creed, there is not one in a hundred who will subscribe to the second. In this point of view I am afraid that Edwards's book (however well meant) has done much harm in England, as it has secured a favourable hearing to the same doctrines, which, since the time of Clarke, had been generally ranked among the most dangerous errors of Hobbes and his disciples.

* To the arguments of Collins against man's free agency some of his late followers have added the inconsistency of this doctrine with the known *effects of education*, (under which phrase they comprehend also the moral effects of all the external circumstances in which men are involuntarily placed,) in forming the characters of individuals.

The plausibility of this argument, (on which so much stress has been laid by Priestley and others,) arises entirely from the mixture of truth which it involves ; or, to express myself more correctly, from the evidence and importance of *the fact* on which it proceeds, when that fact is stated with due limitations.

That the influence of *education* in this comprehensive sense of the word was greatly underrated by our ancestors is now universally acknowledged, and it is to Locke's writings, more than to any other single cause, that the change in public opinion on this head is to be ascribed. On various occasions he has expressed himself very strongly with respect to the *extent* of this influence, and has more than once intimated his belief, that the great majority of men continue through life what early education had made them. In making use, however, of this strong language, his object (as is evident from the opinions which he has avowed in other parts of his works) was only to arrest the attention of his readers to the practical lessons he was anxious to inculcate ; and not to state a metaphysical *fact* which was to be literally and rigorously interpreted in the controversy about liberty and necessity. The only sound and useful *moral* to be drawn from the *spirit* of his observation is, the duty of gratitude to Heaven for all the blessings, in respect of education and of external situation, which have

In this view of the subject, and indeed in the very selection of his premises, it is remarkable how completely Collins has anticipated Dr Jonathan Edwards, the most celebrated, and indisputably the ablest champion, in later times, of the scheme of necessity. The coincidence is so perfect, that the outline given by the former of the plan of his work might have served with equal propriety as a preface to that of the latter.

From the above summary, and still more from the whole tenor of the *philosophical inquiry*, it is evident that Collins (one of the most obnoxious writers of his days to divines of all denominations) was not less solicitous than his successor, Edwards, to reconcile his metaphysical notions with man's accountableness and moral agency. The remarks, accordingly, of Clarke upon Collins's work are equally applicable to that

fallen to our own lot ; the impossibility of ascertaining the involuntary misfortunes by which the seeming demerits of others may have been in part occasioned, and in the same proportion diminished ; and the consequent obligation upon ourselves to think as charitably as possible of their conduct under the most unfavourable appearances. The truth of all this I conceive to be implied in these words of Scripture, " To whom much is given of them much will be required ;" and, if possible, still more explicitly and impressively in the *Parable of the Talents*.

Is not the use which has been made by Necessitarians of Locke's *Treatise on Education*, and other books of a similar tendency, only one instance more of that disposition, so common among metaphysical sciolists, to conceal from the world their incapacity to add to the stock of useful knowledge, by appropriating to themselves the conclusions of their wiser and more sober predecessors, under the startling and imposing disguise of universal maxims, admitting neither of exception nor restriction ? It is thus that Locke's judicious and refined remarks on the *Association of Ideas* have been exaggerated to such an extreme in the coarse caricatures of Hartley and of Priestley, as to bring among cautious inquirers some degree of discredit on one of the most important doctrines of modern philosophy. Or, to take another case still more in point, it is thus that Locke's reflections on the effects of education in modifying the intellectual faculties, and (where skilfully conducted) in supplying their original defects, have been distorted into the puerile paradox of Helvetius, that the mental capacities of the whole human race are the same at the moment of birth. It is sufficient for me here to throw out these hints, which will be found to apply equally to a large proportion of other theories started by modern metaphysicians.

of Edwards. It is to be regretted that they seem never to have fallen into the hands of this very acute and candid reasoner. As for Collins, it is a remarkable circumstance that he attempted no reply to this tract of Clarke's, although he lived twelve years after its publication. The reasonings contained in it, together with those on the same subject in his correspondence with Leibnitz, and in his demonstration of the being and attributes of God, form, in my humble opinion, the most important, as well as powerful, of all his metaphysical arguments.* The adversaries with whom he had to contend were both of them eminently distinguished by ingenuity and subtlety, and he seems to have put forth to the utmost his logical strength, in contending with such antagonists. "The liberty or moral agency of man" (says his friend Dr Hoadley) "was a darling point to him. He excelled always and showed a superiority to all, whenever it came into private discourse or public debate. But he never more excelled than when he was pressed with the strength Leibnitz was master of; which made him exert all his talents to set it once again in a clear light, to guard it against the evil of metaphysical obscurities, and to give the finishing stroke to a subject which must ever be the foundation of morality in man, and is the ground of the accountableness of intelligent creatures for all their actions."

It is needless to say, that neither Leibnitz nor Collins admitted the fairness of the inferences which Clarke conceived to follow from the scheme of necessity. But almost every page in the subsequent history of this controversy may be regarded as an additional illustration of the soundness of Clarke's reasonings, and of the sagacity with which he anticipated the fatal errors likely to ensue from the system which he opposed.

* Voltaire, who in all probability never read either Clarke or Collins, has said that the former replied to the latter only by theological reasonings; "*Clarke n'a répondu à Collins qu'en Théologien.*" (Quest. Sur l'Encyc. Art. LIBERTE'.) Nothing can be more remote from the truth. The argument of Clarke is wholly *metaphysical*, whereas his antagonist in various instances has attempted to wrest to his own purposes the words of Scripture.

“ Thus” (says a very learned and pious disciple of Leibnitz, who made his first appearance as an author about thirty years after the death of his master. *)—“ Thus the same chain embraces the physical and moral worlds, binds the past to the present, the present to the future, the future to eternity.”

“ That wisdom which has ordained the existence of this chain has doubtless willed that of every link of which it is composed. A CALIGULA is one of those links, and this link is of iron. A MARCUS AURELIUS is another link, and this link is of gold. Both are necessary parts of one whole which could not but exist. Shall God then be angry at the sight of the iron link ? What absurdity ! God esteems this link at its proper value : He sees it in its cause, and he approves this cause, for it is good. God beholds moral monsters as he beholds physical monsters. Happy is the link of gold ! Still more happy if he know that he is *only fortunate*. † He has attained the highest degree of moral perfection, and is nevertheless without pride, knowing that what he is, is the necessary result of the place which he must occupy in the chain.”

“ The Gospel is the allegorical exposition of this system ; the simile of the potter is its summary.” ‡

In what essential respect does this system differ from that of Spinoza ? Is it not even more dangerous in its practical tendency, in consequence of the high strain of mystical devotion by which it is exalted ?

This objection, however, does not apply to the quotations which follow. They exhibit, without any colouring of imagination or of enthusiasm, the scheme of necessity pushed to the remotest and most alarming conclusions which it appeared to Clarke to involve ; and as they express the serious and avowed creed of two of our contemporaries, (both of them men of dis-

* Charles Bonnet, born 1720, died 1793.

† The words in the original are, “ Heureux le chainon d’or ! plus heureux encore, s’il sait qu’il n’est qu’ heureux.” The double meaning of *heureux*, if it render the expression less logically precise, gives it at least an epigrammatic turn which cannot be preserved in our language.

‡ Bonnet, T. VIII. pp. 237, 238.

tinguished talents,) may be regarded as a proof, that the zeal displayed by Clarke against the metaphysical principles which led ultimately to such results, was not so unfounded as some worthy and able inquirers have supposed.

“ All that is must be” (says the Baron de Grimm, addressing himself to the Duke of Saxe-Gotha,) “ all that is must be, “ even because it is ; this is the only sound philosophy ; as long “ as we do not know this universe *a priori*, (as they say in the “ schools,) ALL IS NECESSITY. * Liberty is a word without “ meaning, as you will see in the letter of M. Diderot.”

The following passage is extracted from Diderot’s letter here referred to.

“ I am now, my dear friend, going to quit the tone of a “ preacher, to take, if I can, that of a philosopher. Examine it “ narrowly, and you will see that the word *liberty* is a word de- “ void of meaning ; † that there are not, and that there cannot “ be free beings ; that we are only what accords with the gene- “ ral order, with our organization, our education, and the chain “ of events. These dispose of us invincibly. We can no more “ conceive a being acting without a motive than we can one of “ the arms of a balance acting without a weight. The motive “ is always exterior and foreign, fastened upon us by some “ cause distinct from ourselves. What deceives us is the pro- “ digious variety of our actions, joined to the habit which we “ catch at our birth, of confounding the voluntary and the “ free. We have been so often praised and blamed, and have “ so often praised and blamed others, that we contract an inve- “ terate prejudice of believing that we and they *will* and act free- “ ly. But if there is no liberty, there is no action that merits “ either praise or blame ; neither vice nor virtue ; nothing that “ ought either to be rewarded or punished. What then is the “ distinction among men ? The doing of good and the doing

* With all due deference to Baron de Grimm, the logical inference ought undoubtedly to have been, “ as long as we know nothing of the universe *a priori*, “ we are not entitled to say of any thing that it either is or is not necessary.”

† Does not this remark of Diderot apply with infinitely greater force to the word *necessity*, as employed in this controversy ?

“ of ill ! The doer of ill is one who must be destroyed or punished. The doer of good is lucky, not virtuous. But though neither the doer of good or of ill be free, man is nevertheless a being to be modified ; it is for this reason the doer of ill should be destroyed upon the scaffold. From thence the good effects of education, of pleasure, of grief, of grandeur, of poverty, &c. ; from thence a philosophy full of pity, strongly attached to the good, nor more angry with the wicked, than with the whirlwind which fills one’s eyes with dust. Strictly speaking there is but one sort of causes, that is physical causes. *There is but one sort of necessity, which is the same for all beings.** This is what reconciles me to human kind ; it is for this reason I exhort you to philanthropy. Adopt these principles if you think them good, or show me that they are bad. If you adopt them, they will reconcile *you*, too, with others and with yourself ; you will neither be pleased nor angry with yourself for being what you are. Reproach others for nothing, and repent of nothing ; this is the first step to wisdom. Besides this all is prejudice and false philosophy.”

The same doctrines have been recently introduced into this country, and I have no doubt with sincerely good intentions, by a very different class of philosophers, the greater part of whom have laboured hard to dispute the connection between the premises and the conclusion. Not so Mr Belsham. “ *Remorse*” (says he) “ is the exquisitely painful feeling which arises from the belief, that, in circumstances precisely the same, we might have chosen and acted differently. This *fallacious* feeling is superseded by the doctrine of necessity ;”† and again, “ The doctrine of philosophical necessity supersedes *remorse*, so far as remorse is founded upon the belief, that in the same previous circumstances it was possible to have acted otherwise.”‡

In another part of Mr Belsham’s work the following observation occurs.

“ *Remorse* supposes free will. It arises from forgetfulness

* Sec p. 490.

† Elem. 284.

‡ Ibid. p. 307.

“ of the precise state of mind when the action was performed.
 “ It is of little or no use in moral discipline. In a degree it is
 “ even pernicious.” *

As to our moral sentiments concerning the conduct and character of our fellow-creatures, Mr Belsham is of opinion that the doctrine of necessity conciliates good will to men. “ By
 “ teaching us to look up to God as the prime agent, and the
 “ proper cause of every thing that happens, and to regard men
 “ as nothing more than instruments which he employs for accomplishing his good pleasure, it tends to suppress all resentment, malice, and revenge ; while it induces us to regard our worst enemies with compassion rather than with hatred, and to return good for evil.” †

From these extracts it appears that Mr Belsham is not only himself convinced of the truth of the doctrine of necessity, considered as a philosophical dogma, but that he conceives it would be for the advantage of the world, if all mankind were to become converts to his way of thinking. In this respect his system is certainly much more of a piece than that of Lord Kames, who, although he adopts zealously the doctrine of necessity, and represents the argument in support of it as demonstrative, yet candidly acknowledges that our natural feelings are adverse to that doctrine ; and even goes so far as to say, that without such a feeling the business of society could not be carried on. In this dilemma he attempts to reconcile the two opinions, by the supposition of a deceitful sense of liberty. We are so formed as to believe that we are free agents, when in truth we are mere machines, acting only so far as we are acted upon. ‡

* Elem. 406.

† P. 316. “ The doctrine of necessity” (says Dr Hartley) “ has a tendency to abate all resentment against men. Since all they do against us is by the appointment of God, it is rebellion against him to be offended with them.”

‡ The very same hypothesis is adopted by the Abbé Galiani, as the only satisfactory solution of the difficulties connected with this subject. “ Voudriez vous savoir” (says he to one of his correspondents, Madame de l’Epinay) “ mon avis sur cette question ? La persuasion de la liberté constitue l’essence de l’homme. On pourroit même définir l’homme *un animal qui se croit li-*

Perhaps no opinion on the subject of necessity was ever offered to the public which excited more general opposition than this hypothesis of a deceitful sense ; and yet, if the argument for necessity be admitted, I do not see any other supposition which can possibly reconcile the conclusions of our reason, with the feelings of which every man is conscious. *Not* that I would insinuate any apology for a doctrine, the absurdity of which is not only obvious but ludicrous, inasmuch as it involves the supposition, that the Deity *intended* that his creatures should believe themselves to be free agents ; and that, while the great mass of mankind were thus deceived to their own advantage, a few minds of a superior order had the metaphysical sagacity to detect the imposition. Nor is this all. If the doctrine of necessity be just, it must one day or another become the universal and popular creed of mankind, as every doctrine which is true, and more especially every doctrine which is supported by demonstrative evidence, may be expected to become in the progress of human reason. What will *then* become of the great concerns of human life ? Will man, as he improves in knowledge, be unfitted for the ends of his being, and exhibit an inconsistency between his reasoning fa-

“ *brc*, et ce seroit une définition complète. Il est absolument impossible à
 “ l’homme d’oublier un seul instant, et de renoncer à la persuasion qu’il a
 “ d’être libre. Voilà donc un premier point : être persuadé d’être libre est-
 “ il la même chose qu’être libre en effet ? Je réponds : ce n’est point la même
 “ chose, mais elle produit absolument les mêmes effets en morale. L’homme
 “ est donc libre, puisqu’il est intimement persuadé de l’être, et que cela vaut
 “ tout autant que la liberté. Voilà donc le mécanisme de l’univers expliqué
 “ clair comme de l’eau de roche ! S’il y avoit un seul être libre dans l’univers,
 “ il n’y auroit plus de Dieu ; il n’y auroit plus de liaisons entre les êtres.
 “ L’univers se détraqueroit ; et si l’homme n’étoit pas essentiellement, intime-
 “ ment convaincu d’être libre, le moral humain n’iroit plus comme il va. La
 “ conviction de la liberté suffit pour établir une conscience, un remords, une
 “ justice, des récompenses, et des peines. Elle suffit à tout. Et voilà le mon-
 “ de expliqué en deux mots.”—Correspondance inédite de l’Abbé Galiani, T. I.
 pp. 339, 340. A Paris, 1818.

I record this as a precious specimen of the flippant metaphysics of a once fashionable *Philosophe* and Abbé in the Salons of Paris. See a lively and amusing portrait of him in Marmontel’s *Memoirs*, Vol. II. pp. 121, 122, 123.

culties and his active principles, contrary to the invariable analogy of that systematical and harmonious design which is everywhere else so conspicuous in the works of nature? *

Lord Kames, who was a most sincere inquirer after truth, abandoned, in the last edition of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*, the doctrine of a *deceitful sense of Liberty*; and in so doing gave a rare example of candour and fairness as a reasoner. But I am very doubtful if the alterations which he made in his scheme did not impair the merits which in its original concoction it possessed in point of consistency. The first edition of this work appeared when the author was in the full vigour of his faculties. The last when he was approaching to fourscore.

SECTION VI.

Is the Evidence of Consciousness in favour of the Scheme of Free-will, or of that of Necessity? †

In what I have hitherto said upon the subject, I have pro-

* This argument is very ably and forcibly stated in a small pamphlet on Liberty and Necessity, by the late learned and ingenious Mr Dawson of Sedbergh.

† It has been lately said by a very ingenious and acute writer, that “in the controversy concerning liberty and necessity, the *only* question at issue between the disputants related to a *matter of fact*, on which they both appealed to the evidence of consciousness; namely, whether all previous circumstances being the same, the choice of man be not also at all times the same.”—*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. XXVII. p. 228.

If the author of this observation had contented himself with saying that this question concerning *the matter of fact*, as ascertained by the evidence of consciousness, ought to have been considered as the *only* point at issue between the contending parties, I should most readily have subscribed to his proposition. Indeed, I have expressed myself very nearly to the same purpose in a former work. (*Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. pp. 74, 75. 3d edit.) But if it is to be understood as a historical statement of the manner in which the controversy has always or even most frequently been carried on, I must beg leave to dissent from it very widely. How many arguments against the freedom of the will have been in all ages drawn from the *prescience* of the Deity! How many still continue to be drawn by very eminent divines from the doctrines of predestina-

ceeded on the supposition, that the doctrine of free-will is consistent with the common feelings and belief of mankind. That “all our actions do now, in experience, *seem* to us to be *free*, “exactly in the same manner as they would do upon the supposition of our being really free agents,” is remarked by Clarke in his reply to Collins: “And consequently” (he adds) “though this alone does not amount to a strict demonstration “of our being free, yet it leaves on the other side of the question nothing but a *bare possibility* of our being so framed by “the Author of Nature, as to be unavoidably deceived in this

tion and of eternal decrees! Has not Mr Locke himself acknowledged the impression which the former of these considerations made on his mind! “I own” says he, “freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that though it be “unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God our Maker, “and though *I cannot have a clearer perception of any thing than that I am free*, “yet I cannot make freedom in man consistent with omnipotence and omniscience “in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truth I most firmly “assent to; and therefore I have long since given off the consideration of that “question, resolving all into this short conclusion, that if it be possible for “God to make a free agent, then man is free, though I see not the way of it.”

A still more recent exception to the general assertion, which has given occasion to this note, occurs in Lord Kames’s hypothesis of a deceitful sense of liberty, as maintained in the first edition of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*. Here upon the faith of some subtle metaphysical reasonings the very ingenious author adopts the scheme of necessity in direct opposition to the evidence which he candidly confesses that consciousness affords of our free agency. Even the latest advocates for necessity, Priestley and Belsham, as well as their predecessor, Collins himself, while they appealed (in the very words of the learned critic) to the evidence of consciousness in proof of the fact, *that all previous circumstances being the same, the choice of man is also at all times the same*, yet thought it worth their while to strengthen this conclusion by calling to their aid the theological doctrines already mentioned. I cannot, therefore, see with what colour of plausibility it can be said that “this matter of fact has been the *only* “question at issue between the disputants.”

It may, however, be regarded as one great step gained in this controversy, if it may henceforth be assumed as a principle agreed on by both parties, that this is the *only* question which can be philosophically stated on the subject, and that all arguments drawn from the attributes of the Deity are entirely foreign to the discussion. I shall accordingly devote this section to an examination of *the fact*, agreeably to the representation of it given by our modern necessitarians.

“ matter by every experience and every action we perform. “ The case is exactly the same ” (continues Dr Clarke) “ as in “ that notable question, *whether the world exists or no?* There “ is no demonstration of it from experience. There always “ remains a *bare possibility*, that the Supreme Being may have “ so framed my mind, as that I shall always necessarily be de- “ ceived in every one of my perceptions, as in a dream, though “ possibly there be *no material world* nor any other creature, “ whatsoever existing, besides myself. Of this I say there al- “ ways remains a *bare possibility*, and yet no man in his senses “ argues from thence, that experience is no proof to us of *the “ existence of things.*” In farther confirmation of this remark of Clarke’s, let us attend to the inconsistency of the scheme of necessity, with the feelings of which we are conscious, while under the influence of remorse. The argument arising from this consideration is very forcibly stated by Cicero. “ Si omnia fato “ fiunt, omnia fiunt causa antecedente, et si appetitus, illa etiam “ quæ appetitum sequuntur : ergo etiam assensiones. At si “ causa appetitus non est sita in nobis, ne ipse quidem appetitus “ est in nostra potestate. Quod si ita est, ne illa quidem quæ “ appetitu efficiuntur sunt sita in nobis. Non sunt igitur neque “ assensiones neque actiones in nostra potestate : ex quo effi- “ citur ut nec laudationes justæ sint, nec vituperationes, nec “ honores, nec supplicia. Quod cum vitiosum sit, probabiliter “ concludi putant, non omnia fato fieri quæcunque fiant.” *

* De Fato, cap. xvii.

The above quotation leads me to take notice of what I consider as a very remarkable and important distinction between the reasonings of the ancient and of the modern Necessitarians. Among the latter the argument commonly begins with a scholastic discussion concerning the *motives* of our actions, and the influence of these motives in determining the will ; an influence which they assert to be precisely the same with that of any other cause in producing its effect. And it is from these premises that the inference is drawn in favour either of the scheme of necessity or of that of fatalism, according to the theological views of their respective abettors. By the ancient Necessitarians, on the other hand, the scheme of fatalism, which was closely interwoven with the whole texture of Pagan mythology, was assumed as a first principle ; and it was from this principle they deduced their proof that man must be a necessary agent. Their process of reasoning, therefore, was precisely the reverse of that of the moderns, the former

If the scheme of necessity had never received another answer, this alone would have been a sufficient one, admitting only the propriety of introducing into the other sciences the same kind of indirect demonstration which is employed in mathematics. In this case our reasonings on the supposition of necessity lead to a conclusion directly contrary to the most irresistible of all evidence, that of *our own consciousness*.

But this appeal to *consciousness* in proof of free agency proceeds altogether (according to some late writers) on a partial and superficial view of the subject ; the evidence of *consciousness*, when all circumstances are taken into the account and duly weighed, being decidedly in favour of the scheme of necessity.

Dr Hartley was, I believe, one of the first (if not the first) who denied that our consciousness is in favour of our free agency. “ It is true,” (he observes,) “ that a man by internal “ feeling may prove his own free-will, if by free-will be meant “ the power of doing what a man wills or desires ; or of “ resisting the motives of sensuality, ambition, &c., that is, “ free-will in the popular and practical sense. Every person “ may easily recollect instances where he has done these several things, but these are entirely foreign to the present “ question. To prove that a man has free-will in the sense “ opposite to mechanism, he ought to feel that he can do different things while the motives remain precisely the same.

employing fatalism to prove the necessary influence of motives,—(“ Ne Appollinem “ quidem futura posse dicere, nisi ea, quorum causas natura ita contineret, ut ea “ fieri necesse esset.”) (De Fato, cap. 14,)—and the latter urging the necessary influence of motives in proof of fatalism. Accordingly, in the passage just quoted from Cicero, the consequences which the scheme of fatalism involves, and the repugnance of these consequences to the universal sentiments of mankind, are represented as a demonstration, in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, that this scheme cannot be true. This clear perception, however, of the inconsistency of fatalism with man’s accountableness or moral agency, there is good reason to believe, was confined to a very few enlightened inquirers, while fatalism continued to be the professed creed of the priesthood, and the real creed of the multitude. Cicero tells us expressly, that in his time it was an article of faith among all the old women in Rome, “ Aniculis fato fieri omnia videntur.” (De Nat. Deor. 2, 15.) The remark, I am inclined to suspect, is equally applicable to the old women (male and female) of modern Europe.

“ And here, I apprehend, the internal feelings are entirely
 “ against free-will, where the motives are of a sufficient mag-
 “ nitude to be evident : where they are not, nothing can be
 “ proved.” *

Mr Belsham has enlarged still more fully on this subject.
 “ When men” (says he) “ who have been guilty of a crime
 “ review the action in calmer moments, when the strength
 “ of passion has subsided, and the contrary motives appear
 “ in all their force, and perhaps magnified by the evil con-
 “ sequences of their vice and folly, they are ready to think,
 “ that they might at the time have thought and acted as they
 “ now think and act : but this is a fallacious feeling, and arises
 “ from their not placing themselves in circumstances exactly
 “ similar.”† We are elsewhere told by Mr Belsham, that
 “ the popular opinion, that in many cases it was in the power
 “ of the agent to have chosen differently, the previous cir-
 “ cumstances remaining exactly the same, arises either from
 “ a mistake of the question, from a *forgetfulness of the motives*
 “ *by which our choice was determined*, or from the extreme
 “ difficulty of placing ourselves in imagination in circum-
 “ stances exactly similar to those in which the election was
 “ made.”‡ And still more explicitly and concisely in the
 following aphorism ; “ The pretended consciousness of free-
 “ will amounts to nothing more than forgetfulness of the mo-
 “ tive.” § To the same purpose Dr Priestley has expressed
 himself. “ A man when he reproaches himself for any *par-*
 “ *ticular action* in his past conduct, may fancy that, if he was
 “ in the same situation again, he would have acted differently.
 “ But this is a mere *deception* ; and if he examines himself
 “ *strictly*, and takes in all circumstances, he may be satisfied
 “ that, with the *same inward disposition of mind*, and with pre-
 “ cisely the *same views of things* that he had then, and exclu-
 “ sive of all others that he has acquired by reflection *since*, he
 “ could not have acted otherwise than he did.” ||

* Observations on Man, Vol. I. p. 507.

† Elements, p. 279.

‡ Ibid. p. 306.

§ Ibid. p. 278.

|| Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity, p. 99.

The very same view of the subject has been lately taken by the *Comte de la*

If these statements be accurately examined, they will be found to resolve entirely into this identical proposition, that the *will* of the criminal, being supposed to remain in the same state as when the crime was committed, he could not have *willed* and acted otherwise. This proposition, it is obvious, does not at all touch the cardinal point in question, which is simply this ; whether, all OTHER circumstances remaining the same, the criminal had it not in his power to abstain from willing the commission of the crime. The vagueness of Priestley's language upon this occasion must not be overlooked ; the words *inward disposition of mind* admitting of a variety of different meanings, and in this instance being plainly intended to include the act of the will as well as every thing else connected with the criminal action.

In the above strictures on these two redoubtable logicians, I have been partly anticipated by the following very acute remarks of Dr Magee on the definitions of *volition* and of *philosophical liberty*, prefixed to Mr Belsham's discussion of the doctrines now under our consideration.

" Volition" (says Mr Belsham) " is that state of mind which " is immediately *previous* to actions which are called voluntary." " *Natural liberty*, or, as it is more properly called, *philosophical liberty*, or *liberty of choice*, is the power of doing an action or its contrary, *all the previous circumstances remaining the same.*"—" Now here" (says Dr Magee) " is the point " of free-will at once decided ; for *volition* itself being included " among the *previous circumstances*, it is a manifest contradiction to suppose the ' power of doing an action or its contrary, " all the previous circumstances remaining the same ;' since " that supposes the power to act *voluntarily against a volition.*" After this Dr Magee justly and pertinently adds,

Place in his *Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*. " L'axiome connu sous " le nom de *principe de la raison suffisante* s'étend aux actions même que l'on " juge indifférentes. La volonté la plus libre ne peut sans un motif déterminant leur donner naissance, &c.—l'opinion contraire est une illusion de l'esprit " qui perdant de vue les raisons fugitives du choix de la volonté dans les choses " indifférentes, se persuade qu'elle s'est déterminée d'elle-même et sans motifs."

Essai Phil. &c. p. 5.

“ Mr Belsham might surely have spared himself the trouble
“ of the ninety-two pages which follow.”

But why have recourse with Belsham and Priestley, in this argument, to the indistinct and imperfect recollection of the criminal, at a *subsequent* period, with respect to the state of his feelings while he was perpetrating the crime? Why not make a direct appeal to his consciousness at the very moment when he was doing the deed? Will any person of candour deny, that, in the very act of transgressing an acknowledged duty, he is impressed with a conviction, as complete as that of his own existence, that his will is free; and that he is abusing, contrary to the suggestions of reason and conscience, his moral liberty?

Sometimes, indeed, when we are under the influence of a violent appetite or passion, our judgment is apt to see things in a false light; and hence a wise man learns to distrust his own opinion when he is thus circumstanced; and to act, not according to his present judgment, but according to those general maxims of propriety of which his reason had previously approved in his cooler hours. All this, however, evidently proceeds on the supposition of his *free agency*; and, so far from implying any belief on *his* part of fatalism or of moral necessity, evinces in a manner peculiarly striking and satisfactory, the power which he feels himself to possess, not only over the *present*, but over the *future* determinations of his will. In some *other* instances, it happens that I believe *bona fide* an action to be right, at the moment I perform it, and afterwards discover that I judged improperly;—perhaps from want of sufficient information, or from a careless and partial view of the subject. In such a case I may undoubtedly regret as a misfortune what has happened. I may blame myself for my carelessness in not having acquired the proper information before I acted; but I cannot consider myself as criminal in acting at that moment according to the views which I then entertained. On the contrary, if I had acted in opposition to these views, although my conduct might have been agreeable to the dictates

of a more enlightened understanding than my own, yet with respect to myself the action would have been wrong.

If the doctrine of necessity were just, what possible foundation could there be for the distinction we always make between an accidental hurt and an intended *injury*, when received from another ; or for the different sentiments of *regret* and of *remorse* that we experience, according as the misfortunes we suffer are the consequences of our own misconduct or not. What an alleviation of our sufferings when we are satisfied that we cannot consider ourselves as the authors of them ; and what a cruel aggravation of our miseries, when we can trace them to something in which we have been obviously to blame !

I shall only add further on this head, (and it is a consideration which deserves the serious attention of all those who are inclined to the scheme of necessity, from an idea that it overturns the doctrine of a *future retribution*), that the connection between the premises and the conclusion in this hypothesis is far from being so indisputable as they may imagine. On a superficial view of the subject, indeed, it may appear that the Deity cannot, in consistence with his *justice*, punish us for what it was not in our power to prevent. But it must be remembered, that the same necessity which destroys *moral evil* on the part of man, subverts all the received notions concerning the *moral attributes of God* ; and makes it quite nugatory to speak of what is to be expected either from his justice or goodness. This argument is stated with great force and ability in one of the chapters of Butler's Analogy ; and although it was originally proposed with a very different view by that profound and excellent writer, I once heard it urged from the pulpit (with the authority of Bishop Butler's name) as a defence of the doctrines of predestination and absolute decrees. I have nowhere, however, seen it proposed in a form so bold as in a historical article of the Edinburgh Encyclopædia, from which I shall quote a few sentences in the author's own words. " While the king" (James II. of Great Britain) " was involved in the deepest distress, in consequence of the

“ desertion of his army, and the success of the Prince of
 “ Orange, he was doomed to suffer from the conduct of his
 “ daughter, the Princess Anne, (married to Prince George of
 “ Denmark), a species of distress still more severe
 “ If Heaven, in this world, ever interposes its avenging arm
 “ between guilt and happiness, may we not consider the loss
 “ of seventeen children as the penalty which it exacted from
 “ the mother, who had broken the heart of the most indulgent
 “ father ; and, as if this exaction had not been sufficiently se-
 “ vere, the infliction of the punishment PRECEDED the commis-
 “ sion of the crime.” *

If crimes and their appropriate punishments be both the ef-
 fects of the absolute decrees of God, it is certainly not more
 inconsistent with his justice that the punishment should PRE-
 CEDE the crime than follow after it.

SECTION VII.

*Of the Schemes of Free-Will, and of Necessity considered as in-
 fluencing practice.*

Collins, in his inquiry concerning Human Liberty, after en-
 deavouring to show that “ *liberty* can only be grounded on the
 “ absurd principles of Epicurean atheism,” observes, that “ the
 “ Epicurean atheists, who were the most popular and most nu-
 “ merous sect of the atheists of antiquity, were the great asser-
 “ tors of liberty ; † as, on the other side, the Stoics, who were

* Article, *Anne, Queen of Great Britain.*

† In proof of Collins’s assertion, that the ancient Epicureans were advocates for man’s free agency, a reference is made by him to the following lines of Lucretius.

“ Denique, si semper motus connectitur omnis,
 “ Et vetere exoritur semper novus ordine certo,
 “ Nec declinando faciunt primordia motus
 “ Principium quoddam, quod Fati fœdera rumpat,
 “ Ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur
 “ Libera per terras unde hæc animantibus extat,

“ the most popular and numerous sect among the religionaries of antiquity, were the great assertors of *fate* and *necessity*. The

“ Unde est hæc (inquam) *fatis avolsa voluntas*,

“ Per quam progredimur, quo ducit quemque voluptas,” &c. &c.

Lib. 2. l. 251.

But it is to be observed that the liberty here ascribed to the will is nothing more than the liberty of spontaneity, which is conceded to it by Collins, and indeed by all Necessitarians, without exception, since the time of Hobbes. Lucretius, indeed, speaks of this liberty as an exception to universal fatalism; but he nevertheless considers it as a necessary effect of some cause, to which he gives the name of *clinamen*, so as to render man as completely a piece of passive mechanism as he was supposed to be by Collins and Hobbes. The reason, too, which he gives for this is, that, if the case were otherwise, *there would be an effect without a cause*.

“ Quare in seminibus quoque idem fateare necesse’ st,

“ Esse aliam præter plagas, et pondera *causam*

“ Motibus, unde hæc est nobis innata potestas ;

“ *De nihilo quoniam fieri nil posse videmus.*

“ Pondus enim prohibet, ne plagis omnia fiant,

“ Externa quasi vi : sed ne mens ipsa necessum

“ Intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis ;

“ Et devicta quasi cogatur ferre, patique ;

“ Id facit exiguum *clinamen* principiorum

“ Nec regione loci certâ, nec tempore certo.

Ibid. l. 284.

Fatis avolsa voluntas.—On this expression of Lucretius the following acute remarks are made by the French translator, (M. de la Grange.) They are not improbably from the pen of the Baron d’Holbach, who is said to have contributed many notes to this edition. (Dict. Historique, Art. GRANGE.) Whoever the author was, he was evidently strongly struck with the inconsistency of this particular tenet with the general principles of the Epicurean philosophy.

“ On est surpris qu’Epicure fonde la liberté humaine sur la déclinaison des atomes. On demande si cette déclinaison est nécessaire, ou si elle est simplement accidentelle. Nécessaire, comment la liberté peut elle en être le résultat ? Accidentelle, par quoi est elle déterminée ? Mais on devrait bien plutôt en être surpris, qu’ il lui soit venu en idée de rendre l’homme libre dans un système qui suppose un enchainement nécessaire de causes et d’effets. C’etoit une recherche curieuse, que la raison qui a pu faire d’Epicure l’apôtre de la liberté.” For the theory which follows on this point I must refer to the work in question.—See Traduction Nouvelle de Lucrece, avec des Notes, par M. de la Grange, Vol. I. pp. 218, 219, 220. A Paris, 1768.

“ case was also the same among the Jews as among the heathens. * The Sadducees, who were esteemed an irreligious and atheistical sect, maintained the liberty of man. But the Pharisees, who were a religious sect, ascribed all things to fate or to God’s appointment; and it was the first article of their creed, that *Fate and God do all*; and consequently, they could not assert a *true liberty*, † when they asserted a *liberty* together with this fatality and necessity of all things.” ‡

To the same purpose Edwards attempts to show, (and it is one of the weakest parts of his book) that the scheme of free-will (by affording an exception to that dictate of common sense which leads us to refer every event to a cause) would destroy the proof *a posteriori* for the being of God. One thing is certain, that the two schemes of atheism and of necessity have been hitherto always connected together in the history of modern philosophy: not that I would, by any means be understood to say, that every Necessitarian must *ipso facto* be an atheist, or even that any presumption is afforded by a man’s attachment to the former sect, of his having the slightest bias in favour of the latter, but only that every modern atheist I have ever heard of has been a Necessitarian. I cannot help adding, that by far the ablest Necessitarians who have yet appeared have been those who followed out their principles till they end-

* With respect to the opinions of the Sadducees and the Pharisees on man’s free agency, see the notes on Mosheim’s translation of Cudworth’s *Intellectual System*, Vol. I. pp. 9, 10.

† In this passage Collins plainly proceeds on the supposition, that all Fatalists are of course Necessitarians, (Collins states this afterwards more strongly in what he says of the Pharisees, see pp. 54, 55,) and I agree with him in thinking, that this would be the case if they reasoned consequentially. It is certain, however, that a great proportion of those who have belonged to the first sect have disclaimed all connection with the second. The Stoics themselves furnish one very remarkable instance. I do not know any author by whom the liberty of the will is stated in stronger and more explicit terms than it is by Epictetus, in the first sentence of the *Enchiridion*. Indeed, the Stoics seem, with their usual passion for exaggeration, to have carried their ideas about the freedom of the will to an unphilosophical extreme.

‡ Pp. 54, 55.—See the authorities referred to by Collins; see also the sequel of the above passage.

ed in *Spinozism* ; a doctrine which differs from atheism more in words than in reality.

It has been objected by a most respectable writer, (the late pious and learned Sir H. Moncreiff, a great admirer both of Edwards's character and talents,) to those who, " without attempting to discuss Edwards's argument, set it down as no-thing more than an intricate puzzle or quibble," that, " if this argument be what they represent it, there must be some way to unravel the puzzle, although they have not the skill, or will not take the trouble to discover it."*

To this proposition I object, 1st, Because I can see little or nothing in the argument of Edwards which has not been already completely answered by Clarke or by Reid. 2d, Because the consequences to which it leads (although to the satisfaction of a few speculative men they may perhaps be evaded by means of subtle refinements and distinctions), are so directly contrary to the common feelings and judgments of mankind, as to authorize any person of plain understanding boldly to cut asunder the knot which he was unable to unloose. In looking over the article *Sophisms* in our elementary books of logic, I find many (such as *Achilles* and the *Tortoise*, the *Liar*, the *Bald*, the *Sorites* or *Acervus*, and various others) to which I should be much more at a loss to give a satisfactory reply than to any thing alleged by Collins or Edwards ; and yet I should think it a most unwise employment of my time to waste an hour in the refutation of any of them. Nor would I feel much mortification if I should be accused of a want of candour for neither consenting to admit the conclusion, nor to undertake the irksome task of combating the premises. Of the truths disputed in these sophisms, there is not one in my opinion more certain than that of man's free agency ; a fact of which our consciousness is so complete, that we cannot even form a conception of a more perfect freedom of choice than we actually possess. On this point it has been justly and acutely remarked by M. Necker, that " when we reflect upon our faculties, we can with ease imagine a supe-

* Life of the Reverend Dr John Erskine.

“rior decree of intelligence, of knowledge, of memory, of fore-sight, and of every other property of our understanding ; liberty is the only part of ourselves to which imagination cannot add anything.”*

In Bernier’s abridgement of the Philosophy of Gassendi, there are some very judicious observations on the practical tendency of the scheme of necessity ; a subject on which his opinion is entitled to great weight, not only from his long residence among the followers of Mahomet,† but from those prepossessions in favour of this scheme, which he may be presumed to have imbibed from his education under Gassendi. I shall quote a few of his concluding reflections.

“De tout ceci jugez si j’ai sujet de croire cette doctrine si pernicieuse à la société humaine. Certainement à considérer que ce sont principalement les Mahumetans qui s’en trouvent infectées, et que c’est principalement encore parmi elles précisément qu’elle est fomentée et entretenue, je douterois presque que ce fut l’invention de quelques uns de ces tyrans d’Asie, comme auroit peut-être un Mahomet, un Tamerlane, un Bajazet, ou quelqu’un de ces autres fléaux du monde qui pour assouvir leur ambition demandoit des soldats qui étant entêtés de predestination, s’abandonassent brutalement à tout, et se précipitassent même volontiers, aux occasions, la tête la première dans le fossé d’une ville assiégée pour servir du pont au reste de l’armée.

“Je sçais bien qu’on pourroit peut-être dire que cette opinion est mal prise et mal entendue par les Mahumetans ; mais quoi qu’il en soit, que doit on raisonnablement penser d’une doctrine qui peut si aisément être mal-prise et qui peut, soit par erreur ou autrement, avoir si étranges suites?”

The scheme of free-will is not liable to any such objection, inasmuch as it seems quite impossible for the most ingenious

* On the subject of such sophisms as Achilles and the Tortoise, many books, we are told, were written, and various individuals are mentioned who fell into fatal diseases, or died of grief, in consequence of their fruitless endeavours to clear up the mystery.—See Bayle’s Dict. Art. EUCLID OF MEGARA.

† See Tome VIII. p. 536, *et seq.*

sophistry to pervert it to any pernicious purpose. Indeed, its great object is to reconcile with the conclusions of our reason those moral feelings which are so essential both to our own happiness and to the interests of society, that they have been regarded by some of the most acute as well as candid partizans of necessity as merciful illusions of the imagination, by which man is blinded to the melancholy fact of his real condition :
 “ *Nervis alienis mobile lignum !*”

There is good reason to believe that the practical consequences produced by the scheme of necessity at the time of the Reformation alarmed the minds of some very able men by whom it was at first adopted. “ The Germans” (says Dr Burnet,) “ saw the ill effects of the doctrine of decrees. Luther changed “ his mind about it, and Melancthon wrote openly against it ; “ and since that time the whole stream of the Lutheran “ churches has run the other way. But still Calvin and Bucer “ were both for maintaining the doctrine ; only they warned “ the people not to think much about them, since they were se- “ crets that men could not penetrate into. Hooper and many “ other good writers did often exhort the people from entering “ into these curiosities ; and a caveat to the same purpose was “ put into the article about Predestination.*

“ Concerning the disputants themselves” (says Dr Jortin,) “ we may safely affirm, that the defenders of the liberty of man, “ and of the conditional decrees of God, have been, *beyond all “ comparison*, the more learned, judicious, and *moderate men* ; “ and that severity and oppression have appeared most on the “ other side.”†

Priestley has somewhere very justly remarked, that there are some men so happily born that no speculative theories are likely to mislead them from their duty ; and of the truth of his observation, I sincerely believe that his own private life afforded a very striking example. Little stress, therefore, is to be laid on *individual cases* as arguments for or against the practical tendency of any philosophical dogma. The case,

* Burnet on the Reformation, Part ii. p. 113.

† Jortin's Dissertations, p. 5.

however, is very different with respect to observations made on so great a scale as those above quoted from Bernier and Burnet.*

SECTION VIII.

On the Argument for Necessity drawn from the Prescience of the Deity.

In reviewing the arguments that have been advanced on the opposite sides of this question, I have hitherto taken no notice of those which the Necessitarians have founded on the *prescience of the Deity*, because I do not think them fairly applicable to the subject; inasmuch as they draw an inference from what is altogether placed beyond the reach of our faculties, against a fact for which every man has the evidence of his own consciousness. Some of the advocates, however, for liberty have ventured to meet their adversaries even on this ground; in particular, Dr Clarke, in his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, and Dr Reid in his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. Both of these writers have attempted to show, with much ingenuity and subtilty of reasoning, that, even although we should admit the prescience of God in the fullest extent in which it has ever been ascribed to Him, it does not lead to any conclusion inconsistent with man's free-agency. On their speculations on this point I have no commentary to offer.

The argument for necessity, drawn from the Divine Prescience, is much insisted on both by Collins and Edwards; more

* The practical influence of the scheme of necessity ought not to be judged of from the lives of its speculative partizans, but from those of persons who have been educated from their early years in the belief of it. In this point of view it might be interesting to trace the history of the immediate descendants of some of the most zealous advocates for necessity. If the principles which they have advanced be just, particularly those they have laid down on the influence of education, the moral characters of their pupils should, or rather *must* be exemplary in no common degree.

especially by the latter, who, after insisting at great length on “ God’s certain foreknowledge of the volitions of moral agents,” undertakes to show, that “ this *foreknowledge* infers a necessity of volition as much as an absolute decree.”

Mr Belsham, on this as on other occasions, rises above his predecessors in the boldness of his assertions. “ The principal argument in favour of moral necessity, and the insurmountable objection against the existence of philosophical liberty in any degree, or under any restrictions whatever, arises from the prescience of God. Liberty and prescience stand in direct hostility to each other. A philosopher to be consistent must give up one or the other.* Upon the whole, the advocates for philosophical liberty are reduced to the dilemma either of denying the foreknowledge of God, and thus robbing the Deity of one of his most glorious attributes, or of admitting that God is the author of evil, in the same sense, and in the same degrees in which this doctrine is charged upon the Necessitarians.”†

On this argument, I shall make but one remark, that, if it be conclusive, it only serves to identify still more the creed of the Necessitarians with that of the Spinozites. For if God certainly foresees all the future volitions of his creatures, he must, for the same reason, foresee all *his own* future volitions ; and if this foreknowledge infers a necessity of volition in the one case, how is it possible to avoid the same inference in the other ?

Mr Belsham seems to have been *not* unaware of this inference ; but shows no disposition on account of it to shrink from his principles. “ It is always to be remembered that the prescience of an *agent* necessarily includes predestination, though that of a *spectator* may not. It is nonsense to say that a Being does not mean to bring an event to pass which he foresees to be the certain and inevitable consequence of his own previous voluntary action.”‡

I have already mentioned the attempt of Clarke and others to show that no valid argument against the scheme of free-will can be deduced from the prescience of God, even supposing

* Elements, p. 302.

† Elements, p. 293.

‡ Elements, p. 307.

that prescience to extend to *all* the actions of voluntary beings. On this point I must decline offering any opinion of my own, because I conceive it as placed far beyond the reach of our faculties. It is sufficient for my purpose to observe, that, if it could be demonstrated, (which, in my opinion, has not yet been done,) that the prescience of the volitions of moral agents is incompatible with the free-agency of man, the logical inference would be, *not* in favour of the scheme of necessity, but that there are some events, the foreknowledge of which implies an impossibility. Shall we venture to affirm that it exceeds the power of God to permit such a train of contingent events to take place, as his own foreknowledge shall not extend to? Does not such a proposition detract from the omnipotence of God, in the same proportion in which it aims to exalt his omniscience?

It is a circumstance not a little curious in the history of the human mind, that, while men have been in all ages impressed with this irresistible conviction of their own free-agency, they have nevertheless had a proneness not only to admit the prescience of God in its fullest extent, but to suppose that there is a *fatal and irresistible destiny* attending every individual. Traces of this opinion occur in every country of the world of which we have received any account. We meet with it among the sages of Greece, and among the ignorant and unenlightened natives of St Kilda. The following Arabian tale, which I quote from the late Mr Harris, will place the import of the doctrine I now allude to in a more striking light than I could possibly do by any philosophical comment.

“The Arabians tell us,” (says this author) “that as Solomon (whom they supposed a magician from his superior wisdom) was one day walking with a person in Palestine, his companion said to him with horror, *what hideous spectre is that which approaches us? I don’t like his visage. Send me, I pray thee, to the remotest mountain of India.* Solomon complied, and the very moment he was sent off the spectre arrived. Solomon, (said he) *how came that fellow here? I was to have fetched him from the remotest mountain of India.*

“Solomon answered, *ANGEL OF DEATH thou wilt FIND him there.*” *

The general prevalence of fatalism among unenlightened nations is the obvious effect of the insidious lessons inculcated by their religious instructors. The chief expedient employed by the priesthood in all rude countries for subjecting the minds of the people, is to impress them with a belief that it is possible, by the study of auguries, of omens, or of judicial astrology, to gratify that misguided curiosity which disposes blind mortals anxiously to tear asunder the merciful veil drawn by Providence over futurity. “Wherever superstition” (says Dr Robertson) “is so established as to form a regular system, this desire of penetrating into the secrets of futurity is connected with it. Divination becomes a religious act; and priests, as the ministers of Heaven, pretend to deliver its oracles to man. They are the only soothsayers, augurs, and magicians, who possess the sacred and important art of disclosing what is hid from other eyes.” †

Between this creed and that of an inevitable fate or destiny the connection is necessary and obvious; and hence in every false religion the scheme of fatalism may be expected to form not only an *essential*, but the *fundamental* article. The considerable influence which this theological dogma (a dogma, too, peculiarly calculated to affect and even to overwhelm the

* The following remark of M. Ancillon upon the difference between the Mahometan doctrine of destiny, and that which prevailed upon the same subject among the Ancient Greeks, appears to me just and important. “Il y a une grande différence entre le destin des orientaux, surtout depuis que Mahomet a fait, d’une doctrine généralement repandue avant lui, un article de foi, et le Polytheisme Grec. Le Grec lutte contre le destin, et tout en succombant sous sa force, il fait preuve de liberté : le Mahumétan se résigne en aveugle avant l’événement ; lors même qu’il agit, il agit en homme à qui l’action ne servira de rien. Le premier murmure contre ce pouvoir, et le supporte avec impatience ; le second s’en félicite parce qu’il dispense de l’activité. Les Grecs plaçoient la force aveugle dans le destin ; et la pensée qui lui résiste, et qui le combat, dans l’homme ; chez les Mahumétans la force aveugle est dans l’homme ; cette force n’est qu’une force passive, et la pensée est dans le destin.”—*Essais Philosophiques*, par Frederick Ancillon, T. premier, pp. 150, 151. Paris, 1817.

† History of America, Book iv.

imagination,) has always had in stifling the sentiment of remorse on the commission of a crime, affords a demonstrative proof of the impotence of such scholastic refinements when opposed to the feelings of nature, on a question concerning which these feelings form the only tribunal to which a legitimate appeal can be made. That a criminal, in order to alleviate the pang of remorse, may have sometimes sought for relief in this doctrine is far from being improbable ; but no man ever acted on this belief in the common concerns of human life ; and, indeed, some of its most zealous partizans have acknowledged, (particularly Lord Kames,) that, were it to prevail universally as a practical principle, the business of the world could not possibly go on.

In the ancient stoical system (as I have already observed) the doctrine of fatalism, and that of man's free agency, were both admitted as fundamental articles of belief. " By fate" (says Mrs Carter) " the stoics seem to have understood a " series of events appointed by the immutable councils of " God, or that law of his providence by which he governs " the world. It is evident by their writings that they meant " it in no sense which interferes with the liberty of human " actions." Of the truth of this remark the most satisfactory evidence is afforded by the very first sentence of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, in which it is explicitly stated, " That opinion, pursuit, desire, and aversion, and in one word, what- " ever are our own actions are in our own power." *

Such, too, is the philosophy of Virgil :

" Stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus

" Omnibus est vitæ ; sed famam extendere factis

" Hoc virtutis opus." †

* That the doctrine of fatalism, however, led some of the stoics to very impious and alarming consequences, appears from the following words which Lucan puts into the mouth of Cato.

" Summum Brute nefas civilia bella fatemur,

" Sed quo fata trahunt, virtus secura sequetur.

" *Crimen erit superis et me fecisse nocentem.*"

Phar. ii. 254.

See also the Seventh Book of the *Pharsalia*, line 657.—Copplesstone, *Prælect. Acad.* p. 277.

† The notions of Virgil, however, on this point, as is well observed by Ser-

The doctrine, however, of fatalism, and of an inevitable destiny, must not be confounded with that of the *Divine prescience*, between which and the freedom of human actions some of our profoundest philosophers, as I have already observed, (particularly Clarke and Reid,) have laboured to show that there is no inconsistency,* while other writers of no less eminence have apprehended that there is no absurdity in supposing that the Deity may, for wise purposes, have chosen to open a source of contingency in the voluntary actions of his creatures, to which no prescience can possibly extend.

Whatever opinion we may adopt on this point, the conclusions formerly stated concerning man's free agency remain unshaken. Our own free will we know by our consciousness; and we can have no evidence for any other truth so irresistible as this. On the other hand, it would unquestionably be rash and impious in us, from the fact of our own free will, to deny that our actions may be foreseen by the Deity, or to measure the Divine attributes by a standard borrowed from our imperfect faculties. The conclusion of St Augustine on this subject is equally pious and philosophical. "Wherefore we are not
 "wise reduced to the necessity, either by admitting the pre-
 "science of God, to deny the freedom of the human will, or
 "by admitting the freedom of the will, to hazard the impious
 "assertion, that the prescience of God does not extend to all
 "future contingencies: But, on the contrary, we are disposed
 "to embrace *both* doctrines, and with sincerity to bear testi-
 "mony to their truth,—the one that our faith may be sound,
 "the other that our *lives may be good.*" †

vius, do not seem to have been quite consistent. How are the following lines which he applies to Dido to be reconciled with the above passage?

"Nam quia nec fato, meritâ nec morte peribat;

"Sed misera ante diem.—Æn. Lib. iv. l. 695.

* So also Milton:

"If I foreknew,

"Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,

"Which had no less prov'd certain unforeseen."

† Note (B.)

APPENDIX II.

(See Vol. II. p. 107.)

AMONG the later philosophers on the continent, the advocates for atheism seem to me to lay the chief stress on the old Epicurean argument, as stated by Lucretius. The sceptical suggestions on the same subject which occur in Mr Hume's *Essay on the Idea of Necessary Connection*, and which have given occasion to so much discussion in this country, do not seem to have ever produced any considerable impression on the French philosophers. Very few of the number, I am inclined to think, have thoroughly comprehended their import and tendency. *

Nam certè neque consilio primordia rerum
Ordine se quæque, atque sagaci mente locârunt ;
Nec quos quæque darent motus pepigere profectò ;
Sed quia multimodis, multis, mutata, per omne
Ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,
Omne genus motûs, et cætûs experiundo,
Tandem deveniunt in taleis disposituras,
Qualibus hæc rebus consistit summa creata. †

* According to De Gerando, (Hist. Comparée, Tome II. pp. 151, 152,) Mendelshon was the first who thought of opposing Hume's Scepticism about Cause and Effect, by considerations drawn from the calculus of probabilities. This statement is confirmed by Lacroix, who refers for further information to Mendelshon's Treatise on Evidence, which obtained the prize from the Academy of Berlin in 1763. De Gerando himself, in his *Traité des Signes et de l'Art de Penser*, (published l'an viii.) has adopted the same view of the subject, without being then aware (as he assures us himself) that he had been anticipated in this speculation by Mendelshon. (Ibid. p. 155.) Lacroix remarks the coincidence of opinion of these different authors, with some hints suggested by Helvetius, in a note on the first chapter of the first discourse, in his work entitled *l'Esprit*. (*Traité Élémentaire du Calcul des Probabilités*.)

† Lucret. Lib. i. l. 1020.

And still more explicitly in the following lines :—

Nam cum respicias immensi temporis omne
Præteritum spatium ; tum motus materiai
Multimodi quam sint ; facile hoc accredere possis,
Semina sæpe in eodem, ut nunc sunt, ordine posta. *

To this argument Diderot repeatedly refers in his voluminous writings ; and even sometimes steps out of his way to introduce it ; a remarkable instance of which occurs in his *Traité du Beau*, and also in the article *Beau* in the *Encyclopédie*.

“ Le beau n’est pas toujours l’ouvrage d’une cause intelligente ; le mouvement établit souvent, soit dans un être considéré solitairement, soit entre plusieurs êtres comparés entr’eux, une multitude prodigieuse de rapports surprenans. Les cabinets d’histoire naturelle en offrent un grand nombre d’exemples. Les rapports sont alors des résultats de combinaisons fortuites, du moins par rapport à nous. La Nature imite en se jouant, dans cent occasions, les productions d’art ; et l’on pourroit demander, je ne dis pas si ce philosophe qui fut jété par une tempête sur les bords d’une ile inconnue, avoit raison de se crier, à la vue de quelques figures de géométrie ; *Courage mes Amis, voici des pas d’hommes* ; mais combien il faudroit marquer de rapports dans un être, pour avoir une certitude complète qu’il est l’ouvrage d’un artiste † (en quelle occasion, un seul défaut de symmétrie prouveroit plus que toute somme donnée de rapports) ; comment sont entr’eux le temps de l’action de la cause fortuite, et les rapports observés dans les effets produits ; et si (à l’exception des œuvres du Tout-Puissant) il y a des cas ou le nombre des rapports ne puisse jamais être compensé par celui des jets.” This passage forms the conclusion of the article *Beau* in the French *Encyclopédie*, and, notwithstanding the pa-

* Lucret. Lib. iii. l. 867.

† Is not this precisely the sophistical mode of questioning known among logicians by the name of *Sorites* or *Acervus* ? “ Vitiosum sane (says Cicero) et captiosum genus.” Acad. Quæst. Lib. iv. xvi.

renthetical *salvo* in the last clause, the drift of the argument is sufficiently obvious.

In one of the articles, however, of his *Pensées Philosophiques*, Diderot has explained his meaning on this subject much more fully.

“ J’ouvre les cahiers d’un philosophe célèbre, et je lis :
 “ ‘ Athées je vous accorde que le mouvement est essentiel à la
 “ matière ; qu’en concluez-vous ? que le monde résulte du
 “ jet fortuit des atômes ? j’aimerois autant que vous me dis-
 “ siez que l’Iliade d’Homère ou la Henriade de Voltaire est
 “ un résultat de jets fortuits de caractères ? ” — “ Je me garderai
 “ bien de faire ce raisonnement à un Athée. Cette compa-
 “ raison lui donneroit beau jeu. Selon les lois de l’analyse des
 “ sorts, me diroit-il, je ne dois point être surpris qu’une chose
 “ arrive, lorsqu’elle est possible, et que la difficulté de l’évène-
 “ ment est compensée par la quantité des jets. Il’y a tel nombre
 “ de coups dans lesquels je gagerois avec avantage d’amener
 “ cent mille six à-la-fois avec cent mille dez. Quelle que fût
 “ la somme finie de caractères avec laquelle on me proposeroit
 “ d’engendrer fortuitement l’Iliade, il y a telle somme finie de
 “ jets qui me rendroit la proposition avantageuse ; mon avan-
 “ tage seroit même infinie, si la quantité de jets accordée étoit
 “ infinie.” *

The very same reasoning, in substance, has been since brought forward by different French mathematicians ; among

* *Pensées Philosophiques*, xxi. See first volume of his work. Naigeon’s edition. With respect to the passages here extracted from Diderot, it is worthy of observation, that, if the atheistical argument from chances be conclusive in its application to that order of things which we behold, it is not less conclusive when applied to every other possible combination of atoms which imagination can conceive ; and affords a mathematical proof, that the fables of Grecian mythology, the tales of the Genii, and the dreams of the Rosicrusians, *may*, or rather *must*, all of them be somewhere realized in the infinite extent of the universe ; a proposition which, if true, would destroy every argument for or against any given system of opinions founded on the reasonableness or the unreasonableness of the tenets involved in it ; and would of consequence lead to the subversion of the whole frame of the human understanding.

I have pursued this argument farther in the Dissertation prefixed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Part ii. pp. 241, 242, 243.

others by the justly celebrated Laplace, in his Philosophical Essay on Probabilities. I shall quote at length one of his most remarkable reasonings.

“ Au milieu des causes variables et inconnues que nous prenons sous le nom de *hazard*, et qui rendent incertaine et irrégulière, la marche des événemens ; on voit naître à mesure qu'ils se multiplient, une régularité frappante qui semble tenir à un dessein, et que l'on a considérée comme une preuve de la Providence qui gouverne le monde. Mais en y réfléchissant, on reconnoît bientôt que cette régularité n'est que le developpement des possibilités respectives des événemens simples qui doivent se présenter plus souvent lorsqu'ils sont plus probables. Concevons, par exemple, une urne qui renferme des boules blanches et des boules noires ; et supposons qu'à chaque fois que l'on en tire une boule, on la remette dans l'urne pour proceder à un nouveau tirage. Le rapport du nombre des boules blanches extraites, au nombre des boules noires extraites, sera le plus souvent très-irrégulier dans les premiers tirages ; mais les causes variables de cette irrégularité, produisent des effets alternativement favorables et contraires à la marche régulière des événemens, et qui se détruisant mutuellement dans l'ensemble d'un grand nombre de tirages, laissent de plus en plus appercevoir le rapport des boules blanches aux boules noires contenues dans l'urne, ou les possibilités respectives d'en extraire une boule blanche ou une boule noir à chaque tirage. De la résulte le théorème suivant.

“ La probabilité que le rapport du nombre des boules blanches extraites, au nombre total des boules sorties, ne s'écarte pas au delà d'un intervalle donné, du rapport du nombre des boules blanches, au nombre total des boules contenues dans l'urne, approche indefinement de la certitude, par la multiplication indéfinie des evenemens, quelque petit que l'on suppose cet intervalle. * * * *

“ On peut tirer du théorème precedent, cette conséquence qui doit être regardée comme une loi générale, savoir, que les rapports des effets de la nature, sont à fort peu près con-

“ stans, quand ces effets sont considérés en grand nombre.
“ Ainsi malgré la variété des années, la somme des produc-
“ tions pendant un nombre d’années, considérable, est sensible-
“ ment la même ; en sorte que l’homme, par une utile prévoy-
“ ance, peut se mettre à l’abri de l’irrégularité des saisons, en
“ repandant également sur tous les temps, les biens que la na-
“ ture distribue d’une manière inégale. Je n’excepte pas de la
“ loi précédente, les effets dus aux causes morales. Le rap-
“ port des naissances annuelles à la population, et celui des
“ mariages aux naissances, n’éprouvent que de très-petites
“ variations : à Paris, le nombre des naissances annuelles a tou-
“ jours été le même à peu près ; et j’ai ouï dire qu’à la poste,
“ dans les temps ordinaires, le nombre des lettres mises au re-
“ but par les défauts des adresses, change peu, chaque année ;
“ ce qui a été pareillement observé à Londres.

“ Il suit encore de ce théorème, que dans une serie d’évène-
“ mens, indéfiniment prolongée, l’action des causes régulières
“ et constantes doit l’emporter à la longue, sur celle des
“ causes irrégulières. * * * *

“ Si l’on applique ce théorème au rapport des naissances
“ des garçons à celles des filles, observé dans les diverses par-
“ ties de l’Europe ; on trouve que ce rapport, partout à peu
“ près égal à celui de 22 à 21, indique avec une extrême pro-
“ babilité, une plus grande facilité dans les naissances des gar-
“ çons. En considérant ensuite qu’il est le même à Naples
“ qu’à Pétersbourg, on verra qu’à cet égard, l’influence du cli-
“ mat est insensible. On pouvoit donc soupçonner contre
“ l’opinion commune, que cette supériorité des naissances mas-
“ culines subsiste dans l’orient même. J’avais en conséquence
“ invité les savans Français envoyés en Egypte, à s’occuper de
“ cette question intéressante ; mais la difficulté d’obtenir des ren-
“ seignemens précis sur les naissances ne leur a pas permis de
“ la résoudre. Heureusement, Humboldt n’a point négligé cet
“ objet dans l’immensité des choses nouvelles qu’il a observées
“ et recueillies en Amérique, avec tant de sagacité, de con-
“ stance et de courage. Il a retrouvé entre les tropiques le
“ même rapport des naissances des garçons à celles des filles,

“ que l’on observe à Paris ; ce qui doit faire regarder la supériorité des naissances masculines, comme une loi générale de l’espèce humaine. Les lois que suivent à cet égard, les divers espèces d’animaux, me paraissent dignes de l’attention des naturalistes.” *

From these quotations, it appears that the constancy in the proportion of births to the whole population of a country, in that of births to marriages, and in that of male children to females, are considered by Laplace as facts of the same kind, and to be accounted for in the same way with the very narrow limits within which the number of misdirected letters in the General Post-Office of Paris varies from year to year. The same thing, he tells us, has been observed in the Dead-Letter Office at London. But as he mentions both these last facts merely on the authority of a *hearsay*, I do not know to what degree of credit they are entitled, and I shall therefore leave them entirely out of our consideration in the present argument. The meaning which Laplace wished to convey by this comparison cannot be mistaken.

Among the different facts in political arithmetic here alluded to by Laplace, that of the constancy in the proportion of male to female births (which he himself pronounces to be a *general law of our species*) is the most exactly analogous to the example of the urn containing a mixture of white and of black balls, from which he deduces his general theorem. I shall accordingly select this in preference to the others. The intelligent reader will at once perceive that the same reasoning is equally applicable to all of them.

Let us suppose, then, that the white balls in Laplace’s urn represent male infants, and the black balls female infants, upon which supposition, the longer that the operation (described by Laplace) of drawing and returning the balls is continued, the nearer will the proportion of white to black balls approach to that of 22 to 21. What inference (according to Laplace’s own theorem) ought we to deduce from this, but that the *whole*

* Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités, par M. le Comte Laplace. 3me Ed. pp. 73, 74, 75, 76. See Note (C.)

number of white balls in the urn is to the *whole* number of black balls in the same proportion of 22 to 21 ; or, in other words, that this is the proportion of the whole number of unborn males to the whole number of unborn females in the womb of futurity ? And yet this inference is regarded by La Place as a proof that the approximation to equality in the number of the two sexes affords no evidence of foresight or design.

“ La constance de la supériorité des naissances des garçons sur celles des filles, à Paris et à Londres, depuis qu’on les observe, a paru à quelques savans, être une preuve de la Providence sans laquelle ils ont pensé que les causes irrégulières qui troublent sans cesse la marche des événemens, auroit du plusieurs fois rendre les naissances annuelles des filles, supérieures à celle des garçons.

“ Mais cette preuve est un nouvel exemple de l’abus que l’on a fait si souvent des causes finales qui disparaissent tous jours par un examen approfondi des questions, lorsqu’on a les données nécessaires pour les résoudre. La constance dont il s’agit, est un résultat des CAUSES REGULIERES qui donnent la supériorité aux naissances des garçons, et qui l’emportent sur les anomalies dues au hazard, lorsque le nombre des naissances annuelles est considérables.” *

With the proposition announced in the last sentence I perfectly agree. That the constancy of the results in the instance now in question depends on *regular causes* (which in this case is merely a synonymous expression with *general laws*,) the most zealous advocates for a designing cause will be the most forward to admit ; and if Laplace means nothing more than to say, that the uniformity of the effect, when observed on a large scale, may be sufficiently explained without supposing the miraculous interference of Providence in *each individual birth*, the question does not seem worthy of a controversy. If the person who put the white and black balls into the urn had wished to secure the actual result of the drawing, what other means could he have employed for the purpose than to adjust to each other the relative proportions of these balls in the *whole*

* Ibid. pp. 84, 85.

number of both? Could any proof more demonstrative be given that this was the very end he had in view?

Nor do I think that the authors whom Laplace opposes ever meant to dispute the operation of these *regular causes*. Dr Arbuthnot, certainly, one of the earliest writers in this country, who brought forward the regular proportion between male and female births as an argument in favour of wise design, not only agrees in this point with Laplace, but has proposed a physical theory to account for this regularity. The theory is indeed too ludicrous to deserve a moment's consideration; but it at least shows that Laplace has advanced nothing in favour of his conclusions which had not been previously granted by his adversaries.

APPENDIX III.

THE following strictures on the Philosophical Essay of Laplace have all a reference, more or less direct, to the argument stated in the foregoing Appendix.

Under the general title of the doctrine of *Probabilities* two very different things are confounded together by Laplace, as well as by many other writers of an earlier date. The one is the purely mathematical theory of chances ; the other the inductive anticipations of future events deduced from observations on the past course of nature. The calculations about dice furnish the simplest of all examples of the first sort of theory. The conclusions to which they lead are as rigorously exact as any other arithmetical propositions ; amounting to nothing more than a numerical statement of the ways in which a given event *may* happen, compared with those in which it *may not* happen. Thus, in the case of a single die, the chance that *ace* shall turn up at the first throw, is to the chances against that event as one to five. The more complicated cases of the problem all depend on the application of the same fundamental principle. “ This principle ” (as Condorcet has well remarked) “ is only a definition (*une vérité de définition* ;) and consequently the calculations founded on it are all rigorously “ true.” *

To this theory of chances Laplace labours, through the whole of his work, to assimilate all the other cases in which mathematics are applied to the *calculus* of probabilities ; and I have no doubt that he would have readily subscribed to the following proposition of Condorcet, although I do not recollect

* Essai sur l'Application de l'Analyse à la Probabilité des Décisions rendues à la pluralité des voix. Disc. Prelim. p. 11.

that he has anywhere sanctioned it expressly by his authority.
 “ Le motif de croire que sur dix millions de boules blanches
 “ mêlées avec une noire ce ne sera point la noire que je tirerai
 “ du premier coup, est de la même nature que le motif de
 “ croire que le soleil ne manquera pas de se lever demain ; et
 “ les deux opinions ne diffèrent entr’elles que par le plus et le
 “ moins de probabilités.”

The only writers, as far as I know, by whom this position of Condorcet has yet been controverted, are MM. Prevost and L’Huillier of Geneva, in a very able paper published in the *Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Berlin* for the year 1796.* After quoting from Condorcet the passage I have transcribed above, these learned and ingenious philosophers proceed thus :

“ La persuasion analogique qu’éprouve tout homme de voir
 “ se répéter un événement naturel (tel que le lever du soleil)
 “ est d’un genre différent de la persuasion représentée par une
 “ fraction dans la Théorie des Probabilités. Celle-ci peut lui
 “ être ajoutée, mais l’une peut exister sans l’autre. Elles dé-
 “ pendent de deux ordres de facultés différents. Un enfant,
 “ un animal éprouve la première, et ne forme aucun calcul ex-
 “ plicite, ni même implicite. Il n’y a aucune dépendance né-
 “ cessaire entre ces deux persuasions. Celle que le calcul ap-
 “ précie est raisonnée et même jusqu’à un certain point arti-
 “ ficielle. L’autre est d’instinct et naturelle. Elle dépend
 “ de quelques facultés intellectuelles dont l’analyse n’est pas
 “ facile, et probablement en très-grande partie du principe de
 “ la liason des idées.

“ Je veux prouver maintenant, que tout cet appareil de mé-
 “ thode, si beau, et si utile, par lequel on arrive à calculer la
 “ probabilités des causes par ses effets, suppose une estimation
 “ antérieure de cette même probabilité ; et qu’en particulier
 “ dans toutes les applications intéressantes qu’on peut faire de
 “ ce calcul, nous sommes nécessairement guidés par un instinct

* As I have not access at present to the paper referred to, I am somewhat doubtful if my memory may not have deceived me with respect to the volume of the *Berlin Memoirs* in which it appeared. The extracts, which I copy from a manuscript of my own, are, I trust, substantially correct.

“ de persuasion, inappréciable en degré, et que tous nos raison-
 “ nemens sur cet objet dependent de notre confiance en un
 “ principe de croyance que le calcul des probabilités ne peut
 “ estimer.

“ * * * * Je dis donc, qu’il y a dans l’homme un principe
 “ (qu’on peut nommer instinct de croyance) que suppose toute
 “ application du calcul des probabilités. Tant qu’on raisonne
 “ dans l’abstrait, on n’est point appelé à se rendre compte des
 “ raisons sur lesquelles on fonde l’estimation de la probabilité
 “ d’une chance. Mais dans tous les cas concrets ou particu-
 “ liers, on ne peut déterminer cette probabilité, que par voie
 “ d’expérience. Or les cas passés n’étant pas liés aux cas à
 “ venir, nous ne les envisageons comme devant donner les mê-
 “ mes resultats, que par le sentiment sourd irrésistible que
 “ nous fait admettre la constance des lois de la nature. Si l’on
 “ prend l’exemple d’un dé, on verra que pour arriver à lui
 “ donner la construction que le joueur a en vue, l’artiste finale-
 “ ment n’a pu se guider que par quelques expériences anté-
 “ rieures sur de tels instrumens aléatoires, et sur celui-là en
 “ particulier. Lors donc qu’il espère les mêmes effets, il se
 “ fonde sur une prévoyance dont la raison ne peut être ap-
 “ précié par le calcul. Et c’est en vain qu’on voudroit sortir
 “ de ce cercle, en remontant de cause en cause ; car finalement,
 “ toute probabilité qu’on voudra estimer Stochastiquement, se
 “ reduira à cet emblème. On détermine la probabilité de vie
 “ par des tables empiriques ; et il en est de même de la proba-
 “ bilité des phénomènes météorologiques, et autres.”

Dr Price, in his *Dissertation on Historical Evidence*, and also in an *Essay* published in Vol. LIII. of the *Philosophical Transactions*, has fallen into a train of thinking exactly similar to that quoted above from Condorcet.* The passage here referred to is well worthy of perusal ; but, on the slightest examination, it must appear to every intelligent reader to be liable to the very same objections which have been so strongly urged against Condorcet’s principles by MM. Prevost and L’Huillier.

* See Price’s *Dissertations*, p. 388, *et seq.*

“ We trust experience” (says Dr Price) “ and expect that
 “ the future should resemble the past in the course of Nature,
 “ *for the very same reason* that, supposing ourselves otherwise
 “ in the dark, we should conclude that a die which has turn-
 “ ed an ace oftenest in past trials is mostly marked with aces,
 “ and consequently should expect that it will go on to turn the
 “ same number oftenest in future trials.” *—“ And so far
 “ is it from being true, that the understanding is *not* the facul-
 “ ty which teaches us to rely on experience, that it is capable
 “ of determining *in all cases* what conclusions ought to be
 “ drawn from it, and what *precise degree* of confidence should
 “ be placed in it.” †

Nothing can be more evident than this, that it is not upon any *reasoning* of this sort that children proceed, when they anticipate the continuance of those laws of Nature, a knowledge of which is indispensably necessary for the preservation of their animal existence. Mr Hume, although he plainly leaned to the opinion, that this anticipation may be accounted for by the association of ideas, has yet, with the most philosophical propriety, given it the name of *an instinct*, inasmuch as it manifests itself in infants long before the dawn of reason, and is as evidently the result of an arrangement of Nature as if it were implanted immediately in their frame by her own hand. It is indeed an instinct common to man and to the brute creation.

That we are able, in many cases, to calculate, with mathematical precision, the probability of future events is indisputable; but so far is this from affording any argument against the instinctive anticipation, the existence of which Dr Price denies, that all these calculations take for granted (as M. Prevost has observed) that uniformity in the course of Nature which we are thus led to anticipate. The *calculations*, it is true, imply at every step the exercise of the understanding; but that no process of the understanding can account for the origin of the fundamental assumption on which they proceed, has been shown by Mr Hume (according to my judgment) with demonstrative evidence.

* P. 392.

† P. 398.

NOTES.

Note (A.) See p. 224.

IN a note which the reader will find in pp. 222, 223, I have quoted a very remarkable passage from D'Alembert's Eloge on M. de Sacy. I am now to quote another equally striking from the preface prefixed by the same author to his *Academical Eloges*. "*Celui qui se marie dit Bacon, donne des ôtages à la fortune. L'homme de lettres qui tient ou qui aspire à l'Académie donne des ôtages à la décence * * * * **" "S'il y avoit eu une académie à Rome et qu'elle y eut été florissante et honorée, Horace eût été flatté d'y être assis à côté du sage Virgile son ami: que lui en eut-il coûté pour y parvenir? d'effacer de ses vers quelques obscénités qui les déparent; le poëte n'auroit rien perdu, et le citoyen auroit fait son devoir. Par la même raison, Lucrèce, jaloux de l'honneur d'appeler Cicéron son confrère, n'eût conservé de son poëme que les morceaux sublimes où il est si grand peintre, et n'auroit supprimé que ceux où il donne, en vers prosaïques, des leçons d'*Athéisme*, c'est-à-dire où il fait des efforts, aussi coupables que foibles, pour ôter un frein à la méchanceté puissante, et une consolation à la vertu malheureuse."*

These two quotations from D'Alembert, (neither of which I recollect to have seen referred to in any English publication,)

* The words printed in Italics in this passage are distinguished in the same way in the original.

present, it must be owned, a strong contrast to some passages in his correspondence with Voltaire and the King of Prussia, which have been industriously brought forward in some periodical works of this country. Which of these inconsistent passages express the author's real sentiments I shall not presume to decide, but I thought it an act of justice to call the attention of my readers to both of them. Indeed, in cases of this sort the only question with the reader ought to be, on what occasions an author spoke the truth,—*not when* he expressed his own opinion. “Qui autem requirunt” (says Cicero with his usual good sense and philosophical liberality) “quid quaque de re ipsi sentiamus, curiosiùs id faciunt quam necesse est. Non enim tam auctores in disputando quam rationis momenta quærenda sunt. Quin etiam obest plerumque iis, qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum, qui se docere profitentur. Desinunt enim suum judicium adhibere: id habent ratum, quod ab eo, quem probant judicatum vident.” *

Note (B), p. 526.

The following passage in one of Gray's letters has a sufficient connection with the foregoing appendix to justify me in giving it a place here. Indeed, were the connection much slighter and less obvious than it is, little apology would be necessary for relieving the attention of the reader, by quoting any thing relating to so important a subject from such a pen.

“I am as sorry as you seem to be, that our acquaintance harped so much on the subject of materialism when I saw him with you in town, because it was plain to which side of the long debated question he inclined. That we are, indeed, mechanical and dependent beings, I need no other proof than my own feelings; and from the same feelings I learn with equal conviction, that we are not *merely* such. That there is a power within which struggles against the force and bias of that mechanism, commands its motion, and by frequent practice

* De Natura Deorum, Lib. I. v.

“ reduces it to that ready obedience we call *habit* ; and all this
 “ in conformity to a preconceived opinion (no matter whether
 “ right or wrong,) to that least material of all agents, a thought.
 “ I have known many in his case, who, while they thought
 “ they were conquering an old prejudice, did not perceive they
 “ were under the influence of one far more dangerous,—one
 “ that furnishes us with a ready apology for all our worst ac-
 “ tions, and opens to us a full licence for doing whatever we
 “ please ; and yet these very people were not at all the more
 “ indulgent to other men (as they naturally should have been ;)
 “ their indignation to (at?) such as offended them, their desire
 “ of revenge on any body that hurt them, was nothing mitigat-
 “ ed. In short, they wished to be persuaded of that opinion
 “ for the sake of its convenience, but were not so in their
 “ hearts ; and they would have been glad (as they ought in
 “ common prudence,) that nobody else should think the same,
 “ for fear of the mischief that might ensue to themselves. His
 “ French author I never saw, but have read fifty in the same
 “ strain, and shall read no more. I can be wretched enough
 “ without them.”*

I shall avail myself of this note to remark, that on the sub-
 ject of free-will, though Locke has thrown out many import-
 ant observations, he is on the whole more indistinct, unde-
 cided, and inconsistent, than might have been expected from
 his powerful mind, when directed to so important a question.
 This was probably owing to his own strong feelings in favour
 of man's moral liberty, combined with the deep impression left
 on his philosophical creed by the writings of Hobbes, and by
 the habits of intimacy and friendship in which he lived with
 the acutest and ablest of all Necessitarians, Anthony Collins.
 That Locke conceived himself to be an advocate for free will
 appears indisputably from many expressions in his chapter *on*
Power ; and yet in that very chapter he has made various con-
 cessions to his adversaries, in which he seems to yield all that
 was contended for by Hobbes and Collins ; and accordingly,
 he is ranked, with some appearance of truth, by Priestley with

* Gray's Works, by Mason, Letter xxxi. (to Mr Stonehewer.)

those, who, while they opposed verbally the scheme of necessity, have adopted it substantially without being aware of their mistake.

Note (C.) p. 532.

That in this part of the world the sexes everywhere approach to equality has been long observed. Major Graunt, (who assisted Sir William Petty in his inquiries relative to Political Arithmetic), from an examination both of the London and country bills, states 14 males to 13 females; from whence he infers that “the Christian religion, prohibiting polygamy, “is more agreeable to the law of nature than Mahometanism “and others that allow of it.”

“This proportion of 14 to 13” says Dr Derham, “I imagine is nearly just. In the 100 years of my own parish register, although the burials of males and females were nearly equal, (being 636 males, and 623 females in all that time), “yet there were baptised 709 males, and but 675 females; “which numbers are in the proportion of 13.7 to 13.”*

Of late years this subject has been examined with far greater accuracy than had been attempted before, by Mr Susmilch in Germany, by Mr Wargentin in Sweden, and by Dr Price in England. From their combined observations it seems to be established beyond a doubt, *First*, that the *number of males and of females born invariably approach to equality*. *Secondly*, that the excess is in favour of the males. *Thirdly*, that this excess is partly counterbalanced by their greater mortality.

With respect to other parts of the globe, our information is much less correct; and here accordingly speculative men have found themselves more at liberty to indulge their ingenuity and fancy. “In Japan” (says Montesquieu, upon the authority of Kæmpfer) “there are born rather more girls than boys; “and at Bantam the former exceed the latter in the propor-

* Physico-Theology, pp. 175, 176. See on this subject a French work of high authority, entitled *Metrologic*, p. 485. Also, Moheau, *Recherches sur la Population*.

“tion of ten to one.” Hence he seems disposed to infer, that the law which permits polygamy is physically conformable to the inhabitants of such countries; a conclusion which some other authors have apprehended to be farther confirmed by the prematurity and rapid decay of female beauty in some regions of the East.

The same argument has been much and very confidently insisted on by Mr Bruce in his Travels to Abyssinia, where he attempts to confirm it by some facts which fell under his own personal knowledge. To his very strong statements may be opposed the testimony of other travellers not less entitled to credit. The assertion of Montesquieu, that at Bantam the number of females exceeds that of males in the proportion of ten to one, is directly contradicted by Mr Marsden in his very able and interesting account of Sumatra, where he resided a considerable number of years. “I can take upon me to assert,” says he, “that the proportion of the sexes throughout Sumatra does not differ sensibly from that ascertained in Europe; *nor could I ever learn from the inhabitants of the many eastern islands whom I have conversed with, that they had remarked any disproportion in this respect.*”

The following passage from a most authentic and judicious traveller is still more full and satisfactory. The author I quote is M. Niebuhr, whose travels through Arabia and other countries in the East have acquired such great and deserved reputation.

“Much has been said in Europe concerning the origin of the practice of polygamy, so generally prevalent through the East. Supposing that a plurality of wives is not barely allowed by law, but takes place in fact, some of our philosophers have imagined that in hot countries more women than men are born; but I have already stated that some nations avail not themselves of the permission given by the Musselman law for one man to marry several wives. It would be unfair to judge of the manners of a whole people by the fastidious luxury of the great. It is vanity that peoples seraglios, and that chiefly with slaves, most of whom are only slaves to a few favourite women. *The number of*

“female servants in Europe, who are in the same manner condemned in a great measure to celibacy, is equal or superior to that of those who are confined in the harems of the East.

“It is true that European clergymen and physicians settled in the East have presumed that rather more girls than boys are born there. I obtained some lists of Christian baptisms in the East; but some of these were filled with inconsistencies; and in the others the number by which the females born exceeded the males was indeed very trifling. I have reason, therefore, to conclude, that *the proportion between the male and the female births is the same here as elsewhere.*” *

I shall conclude this note, by once more recalling the attention of the reader to the important fact, that from the latest and most accurate observations made both in the old and new world, Laplace has thought himself authorized to conclude, that this balance between the sexes (with a trifling preponderance in favour of the male) may be regarded as *an universal law with regard to the human race.* In forming this conclusion, Laplace appears to have been much struck with the result of Humboldt’s researches in America, where he found that even between the tropics the same proportion of male births to female obtained as was observed at Paris. The sanction thus deliberately given by this illustrious mathematician to the universality of the fact will, I hope, in the opinion of the great majority of my readers, add more weight to the argument in favour of design than his reasonings quoted in the text furnish against it.

In confirmation of Laplace’s conclusion with respect to the universality of this law, I am assured by the best authority, that, from a recent census in our Indian empire, it appears that the very same proportion between the sexes takes place there as in Europe.

* Heron’s Translation, Vol. II. p. 213.

THE END.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

P. 5, line 14 from bottom, *for* leads *read* lead.

P. 96, line 7 from the top, after the word exist insert a comma.

VOL. II.

P. 231. After the words, "that our future condition will be not wholly different *in kind* from what we have already experienced," insert the following foot note:

The same idea occurs in Milton, who seems to have thought the conjecture not improbable, however different from the common belief of the world.

What if earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven and things therein,
Each to other like more than on earth is thought

Par. Lost, Book v.

P. 247, line 9 from the bottom, *for* those *read* that.

P. 409, line 13 from the top, *for* inefficiency *read* inefficacy.

P. 491, line 8 from the bottom, *for* paracédé *read* a précédé.



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